

## Veteran Mental Health Community-Based Organization Grant Recipients Announced

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin  
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***Governor announces two new grant programs designed to support veterans' mental health.***

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MILWAUKEE — Gov. Tony Evers, together with Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Secretary James Bond, announced Thursday 16 nonprofit organizations are receiving Veteran Mental Health Community-Based Organization Grant funding to promote positive mental health through activities, programs, and services that enhance the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of Wisconsin veterans. In addition to announcing organizations that will receive Veteran Mental Health Community-Based Organization Grant funding, Gov. Evers today also [announced](#) two additional veteran mental health grants for mental health providers—the Emergency Mental Health Grant to serve veterans with crisis or emergency mental health needs and the Ancillary Mental Health Grant for licensed providers to administer mental health services to veterans.



“Last year, I created the Blue Ribbon Commission on Veteran Opportunity to make recommendations and develop solutions for how we can support our state’s veterans, and I’m

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proud to say we're seeing the real results of our work to help ensure Wisconsin's 300,000 veterans have more tools and resources they need to be successful," said Gov. Evers. "2023 is the Year of Mental Health in Wisconsin, and an important part of our efforts to support our veterans includes making sure we're addressing the mental and behavioral health challenges facing veterans across our state. These grants are a critically important part of this work and will help meet our veterans' unique needs and ensure they have the support to live full, healthy lives."



The Veteran Mental Health Community-Based Organization Grants are part of Gov. Evers' [\\$10 million investment](#)

in veterans services, which was funded through the American Rescue Plan Act and based on recommendations released by the

[Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Veteran Opportunity](#)

. In his

[2022 State of the State address](#)

, Gov. Evers

[announced](#)

that he would be signing an executive order creating the Commission to develop new, innovative initiatives to support the more than 300,000 veterans who live in Wisconsin. The Commission was charged with identifying gaps in existing services, areas in need of robust investment, and reducing barriers to economic security, including efforts to expand access to higher education and job training, address housing insecurity, and increase mental and behavioral health support and substance use disorder treatment. Following the

[release](#)

of the Commission's final report and recommendations in September 2022, Gov. Evers announced this \$10 million investment in veterans services across the state, and more details about the investment are available

[here](#)

"Serving veterans is a collective effort," said DVA Secretary Bond. "This is especially true when it comes to mental health. I'm grateful to these nonprofits who are in their communities working with veterans to improve their mental well-being. Their good work sends a vital message to all Wisconsin veterans—you are not alone."

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The 16 grant recipients and their planned projects, totaling nearly \$650,000, are:

[\*\*Access Ability Wisconsin\*\*](#) received \$50,000 to expand its program to support veterans and their families in underserved communities, allowing them to purchase adaptive equipment and conduct four education workshops with veterans dealing with mental health challenges. It will also support their outreach to organizations that help veterans with mental stress and moral injury.

[\*\*Art Therapy House\*\*](#) received \$50,000 to allocate for therapist and facilitator fees, digital art equipment, digital art supplies, administration costs, and space charges for programs available for veterans.

[\*\*Easter Seals of Wisconsin\*\*](#) received \$10,000 to be allocated for its Veterans Family Camp. Since 2009, they have offered two weekends each year to veterans with disabilities and their families at no charge. This grant will help support the Veterans Family Camp program for veterans and their families in the upcoming year.

[\*\*Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps\*\*](#) received \$25,000 to address the needs and challenges of senior veterans experiencing homelessness who are disadvantaged and represent underserved populations. It will also go toward the implementation of ecotherapy activities, using the outdoors to aid in mental health therapy.

[\*\*Great Lakes Dryhooch\*\*](#) received \$50,000 to create recruitment materials and outreach throughout Wisconsin for their Quick Reaction Force and Battle Peer programs, as well as to train a corps of 20 peer mentors and provide peer support to 100 Wisconsin veterans. At least 50 percent of the participants will be from rural parts of Wisconsin.

[\*\*Hope's Chariot\*\*](#), a nonprofit organization that provides therapeutic sessions utilizing equine therapy methods, received \$30,000 to help increase their offered therapies to three times a week at no charge to veterans.

[\*\*Lift for 22\*\*](#) received \$20,000 to provide peer-to-peer support, sports recreation, wellness, professional development, and advocacy to veterans and their families. This grant will be used to improve their existing facility in Oak Creek and hire additional staff, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of aging and older veterans. The funds will also help expand their operations to Madison and Appleton.

[\*\*LifeStriders Inc.\*\*](#) received \$50,000 for the salaries of therapists, consultants, equipment, supplies, building maintenance, and utility expenses in serving veterans. LifeStriders works with veterans and their families to provide individual and group counseling, individual occupational or physical therapy, equine therapy, and weekly veterans group rides.

[\*\*Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan Inc.\*\*](#) received a grant of \$50,000 to enhance the clinical services provided to veterans across Wisconsin who are experiencing housing insecurity and provide more staff training for related clinical services.

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**Next 18 Inc.** received \$24,960 to fund its 2023 Veteran Camp and Outreach Program. It is a four-day golf retreat offered free of charge to disabled veterans and first responders. The camp provides introductions to resources such as yoga, meditation, breathwork, mindfulness and body scans, small group therapy sessions, and more.

**Patriot K9's of Wisconsin** received \$50,000 to support its Veteran Service Dog Training Program including salary and related expenses for staff, animal supplies, veteran outreach, and operations.

**Rock Valley Community Programs Inc.** received \$40,000 to improve the Health and Wellness Center in their transitional living facility by replacing equipment and upgrading items in their center.

**Sherman Phoenix Foundation Inc.** received \$49,999.84 to support the operation costs of their Soldier to Civilian Program, which will offer mental health workshops and support to veterans and designed to enhance emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

**Trinity Equestrian Center** of Eau Claire received \$50,000 to expand its Veteran Wellness Program by covering the direct costs of providing additional weekly equine therapy sessions.

**Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin** received a \$50,000 grant to add a veteran peer support specialist to their existing suicide prevention program, the 9-LINE Veteran Support Program.

**The War Memorial Center** received \$50,000 to help continue supportive services and initiatives 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.