

NEWS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Announces Third Quarter, Fiscal Year 2024, Illinois Lottery Veterans' Cash Grants

Springfield, IL - The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) announces nearly \$700,000 in Veterans' Cash Grant Program awards to Illinois organizations that provide vital services to veterans and their families across Illinois. Awardees will receive funding to address veteran homelessness, post-traumatic stress treatment, workforce development, education, transportation training, and community development programs. The recipients are:

- **Legal Aid Chicago, Chicago (Cook County), IL** – This \$100,000 grant will provide legal assistance to veterans across Illinois, with a focus on the metropolitan Chicago area. Legal Aid Chicago helps veterans access and maintain public benefits from various agencies through in-person outreach and phone intake. It also offers advice and internal referrals to its attorneys for housing, consumer, employment, and family law matters.
- **Freedom Paws Service Dogs Foundation, Chillicothe (Peoria County), IL** – This \$100,000 grant primarily covers the cost of a vehicle to transport dogs for training and assistance, ensuring they have prompt access to veterinary care and support during emergencies. Additionally, it covers the cost of a dog trainer and supplies. Freedom Paws Service Dogs provides trained service dogs to veterans with physical disabilities, PTSD, or other service-related conditions.
- **Goodwill of Central Illinois, Peoria (Peoria County), IL** – This \$49,000 grant will enable Goodwill of Central Illinois to install solar panels at its Downing Veterans Home serving 15 residents. The project will enhance sustainability by investing in clean, renewable energy sources to reduce electrical expenses. Solar panels will serve as a visible testament to Goodwill's environmental dedication, boosting pride among resident veterans and demonstrating our commitment to the community.

- **Brushwood Center and Ryerson Woods, Riverwoods (Lake County), IL** – This \$63,000 grant will fund At Ease: Art and Nature for Veterans which aims to enhance veterans' well-being by integrating nature and the arts. It will provide over 450 veterans with 90 workshops in the coming year. Research indicates that combining time in nature with creative arts reduces stress and improves mental health conditions like PTSD. Brushwood Center hosts sessions at various locations, including Ryerson Woods and the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, and virtually, making it the sole program in the Chicago area offering this unique approach to veterans' behavioral health.
- **BraveHearts Therapeutic Riding & Educational Center, Harvard (McHenry County), IL** – This \$100,000 grant will provide equine-assisted services for 250 veterans statewide. Since 2007, BraveHearts has positively impacted thousands of Illinois veterans.

The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, Chicago (Cook County), IL – This \$75,000 grant offers comprehensive employment services and support to Chicago-area veterans, enhancing their prospects and overall well-being. Veterans also receive complimentary vision care, mental health services, and support groups.

One Woman and a Broken Pencil Dare to Care Mobile Mission (OWBP), Westchester (Cook County), IL – This \$100,000 grant addresses the critical needs of homeless veterans in Cook County. Through this initiative, OWBP distributes essential items such as food, clothing, healthcare kits, and sleeping gear to homeless veterans. This project is vital as it provides immediate support to veterans facing homelessness, ensuring they have access to necessities and improving their quality of life. This grant will serve 200 veterans in the Chicago area.

- **Med Dash Pharmacy NFP, Westchester (Cook County), IL** – This \$100,000 grant removes healthcare barriers and addresses veterans' basic needs. Met Dash Pharmacy provides free transportation to access medical care, hygiene kits, and clothing to improve veterans' daily life, promoting dignity and comfort.

“The grant recipients of the Illinois Lottery Cash Grants provide critical, forward-thinking services, and we are confident that veterans across Illinois will benefit,” said **IDVA Director Terry Prince**. “We are grateful for our partnership with the Illinois State Lottery for dedicating the Winter Riches ticket to veterans’ services and programs.”

“It is a joy every quarter to see the true benefit of our partnership with IDVA,” said **Illinois Lottery Director Harold Mays**. “We know that the proceeds from the specialty ticket are well deserved and well received.”

Illinois is the first state in the United States to designate 100 percent of net proceeds of a lottery ticket to veterans. Launched in 2006, more than \$20 million in grants have been awarded to approximately 400 veterans organizations statewide. The Winter Riches \$2 lottery tickets are sold between November through February and grant applications are accepted throughout the year.

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs awards these funds through Veterans' Cash Grants. Every quarter, IDVA's committee reviews applications and awards grants to groups that have demonstrated proven need. Eligibility is open to government agencies, not-for-profits, veterans' organizations, and tax-exempt entities currently providing veterans' assistance or wishing to expand their services into veterans' assistance.

For more information on Veterans' Cash Grants, visit:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/Pages/veterans-cash.aspx>

For more information on the Illinois Lottery, visit: www.illinoislottery.com