



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

833 SOUTH SPRING STREET, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62704

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Maureen S Hartigan
maureen.hartigan@illinois.gov
773-590-9848

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

Springfield, IL - The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) announces over \$860,000 Veterans' Cash Grant Program awards to ten Illinois organizations that provide vital services to veterans and their families across Illinois. Awardees will receive funding to address critical issues facing veterans including homelessness, post-traumatic stress treatment, behavioral health treatment, and workforce development.

Illinois is the first state in the United States to designate 100 percent of the 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 were sold between November through February. As of July 1, 2024, the specialty ticket has been replaced, and IDVA is now part of the Joint Special Instant Scratch-Off game. Proceeds are shared with nine other causes through the \$5 Bingo Tripler scratch-off ticket, which is sold year-round.

"We continue to be impressed by the high level of applicants for the Veterans Cash Grants," said **IDVA Director Terry Prince**. "Those selected are offering quality programs to veterans that will launch them into self-sufficiency and manage PTSD and other behavioral challenges resulting from service. We are grateful for our partnership with the Illinois Lottery, which makes these grants possible."

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 and to apply, visit: <https://veterans.illinois.gov/programs/veterans-cash.html>

The recipients are:

Donka, Inc. (Wheaton, IL): This \$71,000 grant supports individuals with physical, visual, and learning disabilities through adaptive technology, computer training, job readiness services, adaptive technology, education, job skills training, and placement assistance. The program will support 75 veterans in the Chicago area and Northern Illinois.

A Safe Haven Foundation (Chicago, IL): This \$95,000 grant provides homeless veterans permanent housing, prevention services, and rental and utility arrears assistance. Grant funds will address financial crises, provide move-in starter kits, and offer transportation and prevention services to support independent living. This grant will support 40 veterans in Chicago and Northern Illinois.

Mended Hearts Stable Inc. (Metamora, IL): This \$100,000 grant provides equine-assisted therapy and education to enhance the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social well-being of individuals with various disorders. The grant allows Mended Hearts to expand its treatment center by adding an ADA-compliant area and developing a veteran support group to build camaraderie.

Merging Vets and Players (MVP) (Chicago, IL): This \$68,000 grant supports MVP which provides veterans with behavioral and physical health challenges a safe environment for exercise and peer mentoring that addresses social isolation, substance abuse, and PTSD.

American Legion Department of Illinois (Bloomington, IL): This \$100,000 grant supports the American Legion's Department Service Officers in assisting transitioning veterans in seeking their earned benefits.

Impacting Veterans Lives, Inc. (Midwest Veterans Closet (North Chicago): This \$100,000 grant will employ six veterans as pantry and warehouse attendants to manage donations and perform facility tasks. This initiative offers paid employment to otherwise unemployed veterans providing them opportunity for self-reliance.

Central Illinois Veterans Commission (Lincoln, IL): This \$100,000 grant will furnish tiny homes for homeless veterans in Central Illinois.

Transitional Living Services, Inc. (Crystal Lake): This \$100,000 grant allows Transitional Living Services to hire veterans facing PTSD, homelessness, reintegration challenges, and employment difficulties. While employed, they receive coaching on job skills, housing assistance, behavioral health support, and nutritional services. The program serves 325 veterans in the Chicago area and Northern Illinois.

Goodwill of Central Illinois (Peoria): This \$30,000 grant funds a Stand Down event which provides essential supplies, medical services, and valuable information on substance abuse and PTSD to veterans. Over 300 veterans attended the 2023 Stand Down event.

Veterans New Beginnings (Chicago): This nearly \$99,000 grant provides 200 homeless veterans in the Chicago area housing support, home management, leasing education, health screenings, family support, transportation, life skills, mental health services, and social activities.