



June 1, 2022

The Honorable Tony Evers  
State Capitol  
Room 115 East  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers:

RE: Report Under Wis. Statute Section 45.437(3) related to the Veterans Employment and Entrepreneurship Grant Program

The attached document serves as the report to the Governor and the Wisconsin State Legislature as required by the above captioned statute related to the Veterans Employment and Entrepreneurship Grant Program for fiscal year (FY) 2021.

As prescribed, the report includes: (a) the number of grants awarded in FY 2021; (b) the amount of each grant awarded; (c) the purpose of each grant awarded; and (d) the outcomes attributable to each grant awarded.

From the appropriation under s. 20.485 (2) (qm), the department may award up to \$500,000 annually in grants to veterans, employers, and nonprofit organizations. One program is the Entrepreneurship Grant, which provides funds to entrepreneurial entities and employment training programs which benefit veterans. Any 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (6) nonprofit registered and in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions that provides entrepreneurship training, technical or business assistance, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes is qualified to apply. The second program, the Employment Grant, provides funds to employers to incentivize the hiring of disabled veterans. Employers that hire a disabled veteran to work full time at a business within the state may receive \$5,000 or up to \$2,500 for a part-time employee. The veteran must have a service-connected disability rating of at least 50%.

Grants to Nonprofit Organizations that assist Veteran Entrepreneurs are awarded once during the year through a competitive application process while the Grants to Employers are available on a rolling basis as employers apply. During FY 2021, four Entrepreneurship Grants were awarded totaling \$370,940.00 and 12 Employment Grants were awarded in the amount of \$28,550.89.

The summary of the support provided to the veterans by these organizations is summarized in this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary M. Kolar".

Mary M. Kolar  
Secretary

Enclosure

CC: Mr. Michael J. Queensland, Chief Clerk, Wisconsin State Senate, [Michael.Queensland@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Michael.Queensland@legis.wisconsin.gov)  
Mr. Edward A. Blazel, Chief Clerk, Wisconsin State Assembly, [Ted.Blazel@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Ted.Blazel@legis.wisconsin.gov)  
Deputy Secretary James Bond, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs  
Assistant Deputy Secretary Kathy Still, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

## Grants to Nonprofit Organizations that assist Veteran Entrepreneurs

### 1. **Fox Valley Technical College Foundation**

**Grant Award Amount: \$99,940**

Purpose: Fox Valley Technical College Innovation Accelerator program is designed to provide education, technical training, coaching, and networking opportunities to veteran entrepreneurs seeking to start a business in Wisconsin. Phase one includes a three-day business model design workshop. Phase two consists of a 10-week E-seed Express Entrepreneurial Training Series on Entrepreneurial and small business management, financing and provides \$1,000 in seed capital as a grant to businesses successfully completing the program. Phase three of the program is a business financing workshop connecting participants with Certified Financial Accountant and other financial resources along with education on accounting procedures and best practices.

Outcomes: 23 of 28 veteran participants launched or are growing a business. Twelve new Veteran owned small businesses are operating in Wisconsin as Limited Liability Corporations (LLC). Five additional businesses are continuing their startup, developing resource networks and products. Seven veterans enrolled in the program with established, early-stage small businesses and six participants are planning to improve or expand operations. One participant withdrew from the program due to their business requiring their time. Seventeen veterans completed the program and submitted a business plan and receipts to qualify for the \$1,000 seed grant funding.

### 2. **Greater Green Bay Chamber of Commerce Foundation**

**Grant Award Amount: \$75,000**

Purpose: Provide entrepreneurship training, technical and business assistance, and financial assistance to veteran entrepreneurs seeking to start a business in the Green Bay region. The program is open to startups in the pre-seed and angel stages of investment, less than five years old and with revenue of less than \$500,000 annually. The 12-week program involves three half-day sessions each week, plus meetings with mentors and a weekly speaker series. Sessions take place at the Greater Green Bay Chamber of Commerce Urban Hub co-working space in downtown Green Bay.

Outcomes: Training and assistance was provided to 135 veterans and marketing efforts reached more than 4,000. Services provided included resume review, interview preparation, coaching and instruction, marketing, and outreach. Grant funds enabled the expansion of the Blueprint Green Bay business accelerator program to underserved geographic areas and relocated Tech4Troops program to Green Bay to provide technology training. The program worked directly with six veterans seeking to start a business and provided services to four veteran owned businesses during the grant period.

### 3. **Wisconsin Hero Outdoors**

**Grant Amount: \$96,000**

Purpose: Provide funding for a Veteran Internship Program which provides training and experience in management and daily operations of non-profit organizations. Interns work with the Developmental Director to gain experience in financial management, non-profit management, marketing, and technical business skills, administration, logistics, and human resources.

Outcomes: Nine veterans were registered as interns with an additional veteran being onboarded at the time of the report. Interns participated in outreach efforts to engage a larger proportion of Wisconsin's veteran community by participating in events and activities across the state. Efforts generated new partnerships for Wisconsin Hero Outdoors resulting in opportunities to provide integrated outdoor therapy to veterans across a broader area of the state and accessing more rural areas.

The Women's Veteran Initiative was created during the grant period in partnership with other veterans' service organizations to engage in direct outreach to female veterans seeking to relate to Wisconsin Hero Outdoors resources and opportunities.

**4. Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce**  
**Grant Amount: \$100,000**

Purpose: Provide funding for the Veterans Business Initiative to provide educational assistance, networking opportunities, promotional programming, and marketing assistance to veteran business owners in Wisconsin. This program consists of virtual events, the command post business accelerator program, and the “Proud to serve you” marketing campaign.

Outcomes: During the grant period, Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce transitioned largely to virtual programming which resulted in increased participation at digital events. Networking opportunities, supplier and contractor presentations and informational workshops were provided on a wide array of business subjects. The command post business accelerator program based out of downtown Milwaukee’s Ward 4 co-working space provided a years’ worth of support and mentorship to 12 veteran entrepreneurs working to launch and build their businesses. Development of digital engagement strategies increased web traffic and visibility of marketing materials for veteran owned businesses. Due to COVID-19 precautions the capacity to provide in-person programming was reduced resulting in the cancellation of multiple events such as the annual Veterans Light up the Arts showcase and Wisconsin Veterans Business Conference.

**Grants to Employers hiring disabled Veterans**

The veteran’s employment grant was awarded to 12 companies that employed veterans meeting the minimum 50% service-connected disability threshold on a full-time or part-time basis.

In FY 21 the veteran’s employment grant was paid to seven companies that employed a qualifying veteran on a full-time basis and to five companies that employed a qualifying veteran on a part-time basis.

The following companies received funding through the program:

<b>Employer</b>	<b>Full/Part Time</b>	<b>Award</b>
Rural Route 1, Inc.	Full Time	\$5,000.00
Levine Eisberner LLC	Full Time	\$5,000.00
Allstate Gordy Ltd Agency	Full Time	\$2,500.00
Tankstar USA	Full Time	\$2,500.00
U.S. Vet General Contracting	Full Time	\$2,346.15
Batteries Plus	Full Time	\$2,268.93
Fox Cities Builders	Full Time	\$1,210.36
Bytec Resource	Part Time	\$2,359.43
American Red Cross	Part Time	\$2,187.50
Cumberland Bus Service	Part Time	\$1,288.76
Environment Control	Part Time	\$1,166.51
Eagle River Bakery, Inc	Part Time	\$ 723.25