

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
MINNESOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

VETERANS SERVICE BUILDING

STATE OF MINNESOTA

20 WEST 12TH STREET

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-2098

January 26, 2024

The Adjutant General

Honorable John Marty
Senate Finance Committee
3235 Minnesota Senate Building

Honorable Liz Olson
House Ways and Means Committee
479 State Office Building

Honorable Eric Pratt
Senate Finance Committee
2217 Minnesota Senate Building

Honorable Pat Garofalo
House Ways and Means Committee
295 State Office Building

Honorable Erin Murphy
Senate State and Local Government
and Veterans Committee
3211 Minnesota Senate Building

Honorable Jerry Newton
House Veterans and Military Affairs
Finance and Policy Committee
367 State Office Building

Honorable Bruce Anderson
Senate State and Local Government
and Veterans Committee
2209 Minnesota Senate Building

Honorable Matt Bliss
House Veterans and Military Affairs
Finance and Policy Committee
311 State Office Building

Commissioner Erin Campbell
400 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street

Re: Annual Report on Support Our Troops (SOT) Account Grants

1. This annual report is submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over military and veterans' affairs pursuant to Minnesota Statute §190.19, Subdivision 3.
2. The statute authorizes the use of SOT funds for four purposes:
 - (a.) Grants directly to eligible individuals.
 - (b.) Grants to one or more eligible foundations for the purpose of making grants to eligible individuals.
 - (c.) Veterans' services.
 - (d.) Grants to family readiness groups chartered by the Adjutant General.
3. No grants were made in 2023 pursuant to purpose 2.(a.) above.
4. The Adjutant General entered into a no-fee grant agreement with the Minnesota Military Family Foundation (MMFF) to administer funds pursuant to purpose 2.(b.) above.

(a.) The MMFF provided 130 service member assistance grants in 2023. Of these, 130 met the requirements of the statute and the grant agreement. Individual grants from MMFF may still be awarded to service members but utilizing organizational funds not associated with the SOT grant.

(b.) The total disbursed for these 130 service member assistance grants was \$647,686.82, but after applying the statutory cap of \$4,000 per service member, \$449,301.13 in Support Our Troops grant funds were distributed. The remainder was paid using funds from private donations to MMFF.

(c.) Each request for assistance was validated by the Minnesota National Guard Soldier and Family Readiness Specialists and was approved by MMFF board action. Requests for support are generally directed to the foundation once local mechanisms have been exhausted.

(d.) Many of the individual requests covered multiple needs. The grants were used for such emergency purposes as:

- Mortgage/Rent (~\$216,000)
- Credit Cards (~\$30,000)
- Emergency Home/Appliance repair/replacement (~\$33,000)
- Utilities (~\$33,000)
- Auto loans/repairs (~\$76,000.00)
- Medical/Dental (~\$32,000)
- Daycare/Child Support (~\$17,000)
- Insurance (~\$8,000)
- Miscellaneous other validated expenses.

(e.) For comparison, the MMFF provided the following grants for the past five years:

2022:	149 grants totaling	\$509,215.98
2021:	76 grants totaling	\$330,558.24
2020:	67 grants totaling	\$211,961.02
2019:	121 grants totaling	\$336,178.21
2018:	117 grants totaling	\$346,440.15

5. Pursuant to purpose 2.(c.) above:

(a.) \$413,718.49 was expended for wages, fringe benefits, and miscellaneous costs for five personnel: two licensed alcohol and drug counselors to meet a critical need for service members and their families; and three Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Regional Coordinators to sustain the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Networks statewide.

(b.) Grants in the amount of \$55,000.00 were disbursed to Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans to support direct services to veterans.

(c.) A grant in the amount of \$40,234.99 was provided to the Minnesota Military Radio Hour to support the expansion of the network that carries military and veteran specific programming to a statewide audience.

(d.) A grant of \$7,500.00 was made to the Armed Forces Services Center to provide snacks and drinks to traveling service members and dependents at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport.

(e.) A grant of \$45,000.00 was made to the Minnesota National Guard Youth Camp to provide food, billeting, and insurance for service members dependents to attend a weeklong youth camp at Camp Ripley Training Center.

(f.) A grant of \$10,000.00 was provided to Meals from the Heart to provide Thanksgiving meals kits to service members in need. These meal kits were distributed from numerous armories and Camp Ripley with the support of the National Guard Family Programs team.

6. All grants listed above are subject to a grant closeout and reconciliation process that may increase or reduce the amount expended. Organizations that did not utilize all the SOT grant funds will reimburse the State of Minnesota.

7. Fifteen (17) grants of \$1,000.00 each were made pursuant to purpose 2.(d.) above.

8. The point of contact for this report is the Executive Director of the Department of Military Affairs, Don Kerr at donald.j.kerr2.nfg@army.mil or (651) 268-8913.

Sincerely,

Shawn P. Manke
Major General, Minnesota Army
National Guard
Adjutant General