



**FOSTERING HOPE AND
PROMOTING POST
TRAUMATIC GROWTH
FOR VETERANS**

Date: 09/30/2024

Regarding the grant period 11/17/2023 – 11/17/2025

Purpose of grant (Ref. Section 2.2 Grant Agreement):

Operate the Warrior's Return Peer Recovery Program, provide up to 46 hours (forty-six) of Peer Recovery training at no cost.

Operate the Emergency Assistance Program by providing direct monetary assistance to those experiencing housing insecurity

Grant Award Amount: \$100,000

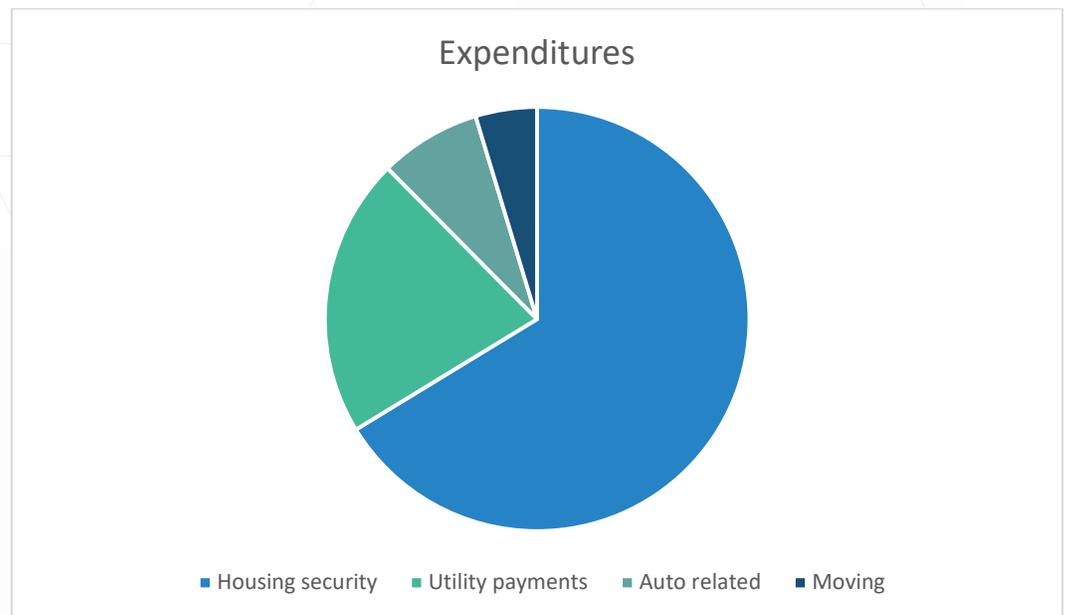
Amount Unspent: \$38,766.21

To date, we have expended approximately 65% of allotted funds, with 2 months to go in the reporting period. We have supported 52 veterans with peer support training and/or emergency assistance funding.

As it pertains to peer support training, we have been able to successfully certify 25 veterans in the past 10 months, making them eligible to take the MN Certification Board Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) exam. As the only veteran-focused program in Minnesota that provides the required 46 hours of training and education, we are very proud of our 74% graduation rate. Although some veterans are not quite ready to complete the challenging coursework, those that do not graduate are welcome to come back and try again in a future cohort. The cost to provide this training to a participant is \$2,228. The grant funds we can access to offset this cost make it possible for us to continue the course and keep improving the level of instruction provided. Over the course of the 5-week program, over 45 different presenters, doctors, psychologists, retired military

officers, special operations veterans, fitness trainers, mental health and emotional health experts educate veterans on how to not only move forward after trauma but become stronger because they have survived that trauma. Through assessments completed during the course, and post-graduation, we know that more than 80% of course graduates are achieving their goals and serving as examples to other veterans, showing them that success is achievable even when they have experienced great traumas.

The secondary criteria set forth in the grant agreement is for ETS to provide emergency assistance funding to veterans when challenges to housing status, employment, and transportation present themselves. Overall, we have spent 68% of the appropriated funds in the previous 10 months. All funds will be expended prior to the end of year 1. Funds have been utilized in 4 areas; housing, utility payments, auto repairs and moving fees.



As illustrated above, most funds, 69%, were used to stabilize housing situations, 21% were used to prevent utility shutoffs or get power turned back on, 8% went to automotive related challenges, and 2% were used to pay for veterans to move their household goods.



The overwhelming amount of funds being needed for eviction and foreclosure prevention and utility related needs prompted us to take a close look at why veterans continue to face challenges paying their rent or mortgage and power or gas bill. Conversations with the veteran, their case manager if involved, and reviews of their bank statements for the preceding 60 days, provided some insight into why these issues are occurring. The informal research revealed two main areas of concern consistently. First, these problems arise for veterans who have not overcome their addiction issues. Reviews of bank statements show repeated charges at liquor stores, tobacco stores, and frequently ATM withdrawals for cash used to purchase substances fueling their addiction.

Second, many veterans have not had any sort of financial management education. A lack of attention to ensuring they spend their funds wisely and a lack of attention to rent and utilities as their primary expenditures leave these veterans in a precarious position.

Organizations such as MACV and the VA do an excellent job getting these individuals housed, but they cannot be responsible for ensuring they pay their bills in the long term. ETS is responding to this need by providing a “budgeting 101” seminar multiple times per year.

Lastly, an unexpected auto repair or even having a car impounded can lead to a downward spiral where a vet is forced to choose between addressing the car related problem or paying the rent or utility bill. Having a car out of commission can lead to an inability to get to work, subsequent job loss, and more trouble paying for the necessities of life including the rent.

No grant amendments have been needed over the course of the grant period.

The most challenging aspect of administering the grant is not being able to receive reimbursement for veterans who do not meet the criteria for reimbursement. Approximately 25% of the veterans we



support are not eligible for funds from this grant due to veteran status, character of discharge, or inability to show Minnesota residency. A smaller, yet relevant, challenge is the fact that we have not used of the funds from the grant for indirect or administrative costs. It was decided prior to the signing of the grant agreement that this would be the case, so ETS has covered any costs incurred for administration of the grant from its general fund.

The grant Program/Activity is on-track to complete on-time according to the current Grant Agreement expiration date.

We expect to utilize all grant funds within the timeline in the grant agreement.

Thomas J McKenna

Director

Every Third Saturday v

