

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 30, 2025

The Adjutant General

Sen. Aric Putnam
3215 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Torrey N. Westrom
2201 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Bruce Anderson
2209 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Ginny Klevorn
5th Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Jim Nash
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Jay Xiong
5th Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Matt Bliss
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Legislative Reference Library
645 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

1. This annual report is submitted to the chairs, co-chairs, and/or 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 2024 pursuant to purpose 2.(a.) above.
4. The Adjutant General entered into a no-fee grant agreement with the Minnesota Military Family Foundation (MMFF) in the amount of \$400,000 to administer funds pursuant to purpose 2.(b.) above.
 - (a.) The MMFF provided 96 service member assistance grants in 2024. Of these, 95 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 96 service member assistance grants was \$467,482.39, but after applying the statutory cap of \$4,000 per service member, \$325,557.93 in Support Our Troops grant funds were distributed. The remainder was paid using funds from private donations to MMFF. The remaining SOT grant funds that were not spent during the grant period, were returned to the Support Our Troops account on January 17, 2025 in the amount of \$74,442.07.

(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 emergency purposes such as:

- Mortgage/Rent (~\$175,000)
- Credit Cards (~\$33,000)
- Emergency home appliance repair/replacement (~\$24,000)
- Utilities (~\$22,000)
- Auto loans/repairs (~\$55,000)
- Medical/Dental (~\$5,000)
- Daycare/Child Support (~\$6,000)
- Insurance (~\$5,000)
- Miscellaneous other validated expenses

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

2023:	130 grants totaling	\$449,301.13
2022:	149 grants totaling	\$509,215.98
2021:	76 grants totaling	\$249,283.19
2020:	67 grants totaling	\$211,961.02
2019:	121 grants totaling	\$336,178.21

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

(a.) \$190,357.29 was expended for wages, fringe benefits, and miscellaneous costs for three personnel: two licensed alcohol and drug counselors to meet a critical need for service members and their families; and one Beyond the Yellow Ribbon support staff member to sustain the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Networks statewide.

(b.) A grant in the amount of \$55,536.03 was disbursed to Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans to support direct services to veterans.

(c.) A grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 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 \$8,000.00 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 \$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. Twelve (12) grants of \$1,000.00 each were made to Family Readiness Groups 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