



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

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News Release

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\$2.3 Million Awarded to Those Serving Texas Veterans

AUSTIN – Thursday the Texas Veterans Commission announced the recipients of over 2.3 million dollars in grants from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

The grants are provided to help recently separated veterans and their families adjust to civilian life and to help all Texas veterans facing difficulties. Services to be funded include transportation to medical facilities, counseling for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), housing assistance for homeless veterans, and family and child services.

“Over 200,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars live in Texas,” says James Richman, Interim Executive Director of the Texas Veterans Commission. “They, and all Texas veterans, have paid a high price for serving our country. These grants fund services to help them live the lives they fought for.”

The Texas lottery scratch-off game, *Veterans Cash*, has been the primary source of funds for Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. Since its introduction on November 11, 2009, sales of *Veterans Cash* scratch-off tickets have provided over \$6 million to the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

The following 12 Texas organizations received a total of \$2,343,480 in grant funds. Veterans, family members and caregivers who would like to use any of these services should contact the service provider directly.

Child Crisis Center of El Paso - \$313,953

City of El Paso, El Paso County, Ft. Bliss and far West Texas

It is the mission of the Child Crisis Center of El Paso to prevent child abuse/neglect by providing emergency shelter to children ages newborn through thirteen who are victims of abuse/neglect or are "at-risk" for becoming victims of abuse/neglect, while providing their families with the support, education, and awareness needed to stabilize their lives. We are providing an essential and unduplicated service for veteran families of this region with the goal of keeping families intact.

Family Service Association of San Antonio, Inc. – \$300,000

Bexar, Atascosa, Comal, Frio, Guadalupe, Kerr, Medina, and Wilson Counties

The Strengthening Families program will strengthen military and veteran families impacted by an Afghanistan-Iraq deployment through counseling, home-based parenting support, marriage enrichment, and child care fee assistance. This program provides pastoral counseling, individual/family counseling, parenting education and children’s support.

Girlstart – \$120,000

Killeen and neighboring ISDs

Girlstart camps are week-long programs for 4th through 8th grade girls developed to increase interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and careers. These camps will reach female children of active duty and veteran families. These summer camps achieve consistent positive outcomes by combining formal and informal education best practices with challenging STEM curriculum, including computer programming, medicine, website design, chemistry, engineering, etc. This grant will also provide for 8 weekend mini-camps for 25 girls each session.

Green Doors - Community Partnership for the Homeless – \$234,638

Travis County

The project is designed to increase access to housing that meets the needs of Austin's most vulnerable veterans and their families through such programs as Veterans Transitional Re-entry Housing Program and the Veterans Rental Assistance Voucher Program. It will also increase access to supportive services which provide veterans the tools that positively influence their housing stability including access to the Green Doors food pantry; employment training, education, and job placement assistance; and household set-ups and transportation assistance to veterans with limited or zero income.

Homeless Veterans Services of Dallas - \$159,165

City of Dallas and counties served by Dallas VA Medical Center

The proposed project will increase efforts for homeless and at-risk veterans in the Dallas area. The organization proposes to expand services to include assistance with obtaining identification cards and birth certificates; providing veterans who are moving into housing from the street or from a shelter with “move-in kits”, bus passes and other necessary materials to aid their search for work; and to provide items to veterans at the annual Stand Down event, including coats, cold weather gloves, toothbrushes/toothpaste, and personal hygiene kits.

Texas National Guard - \$160,000

Statewide

Operation Urgent Care provides funding for emergency or “gap” health and dental insurance coverage for unemployed or underemployed Texas National Guard service members, including emergency funding for routine and catastrophic co-pays. This project will provide temporary emergency assistance to soldiers for health insurance and related payments.

Rains County Veterans Services Transportation - \$34,100

Rains County

The project goal is to provide transportation for veterans/spouses/dependents and necessary non veteran escorts/attendants to VA medical appointments. Other veterans will also be transported on a space available basis.

Ride on Center for Kids - \$40,259

Williamson, Travis, Bell, and Bastrop Counties

Grant funds will be used to provide individual counseling for PTSD and TBI as a part of Horses for Heroes, an ongoing equine assisted therapy program. Horses for Heroes is a nationally recognized, NARHA-endorsed program that R.O.C.K. helped to develop by providing staff and expertise during the pilot program for amputees at BAMC in the summer and fall of 2005. This program is now being endorsed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and NARHA (governing organization for therapeutic riding) for establishment as on-going nationwide program.

Salvation Army - Port Arthur - \$93,590

Jefferson County

Funds will be used to provide Emergency Financial Assistance for rent, utilities, and prescription assistance for veterans and their families; Transportation Services to be used for bus tickets or gasoline vouchers to the VA clinic in Beaumont or to the VA hospital in Houston; and Housing Assistance for Homeless Veterans which will provide first month rental assistance to prevent or end homelessness and continue this assistance for a maximum of four months.

Samaritan Center for Counseling and Pastoral Care - \$336,568

Williamson, Travis, Hays and surrounding counties

Program Goals: Improve access to mental health care to improve the mental health and family functioning of veterans and their families. The Center will lead a Veterans Behavioral Health Planning Partnership to connect veterans to behavioral health support and services in 20 Central Texas counties. Inclusion of primary care physicians; law enforcement; criminal justice; school districts; institutions of higher learning; all homeless service programs; faith based organizations and providers of alternative medicine useful for decompression during reentry into family and community life will be made.

United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County - \$260,335

Bexar, surrounding counties and worldwide

Through the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, 211 provides a 24-hour, 7-day a week call center where Texas Veterans and their families can talk with a military peer who will assess and direct their needs in a non-judgmental and confidential manner. These specialists will connect those in need with the appropriate services and advocate for their needs as necessary. While currently available in the Alamo region of Texas for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families, this project aims to expand the program to all Texas Veterans and their families regardless of their Overseas Contingency Operations experiences.

VetRides - \$90,230

Burnet, Lampasas, and Llano counties

The goal of the Burnet, Llano, and Lampasas Counties Veteran's Transportation Project (VETRIDES) is to provide no cost local and out of town transportation services to qualified veterans and their dependants in Burnet, Llano, and Lampasas Counties. The

objective is to lease two accessible vans in order to provide safe, secure, and dependable transportation to qualified veterans and their dependants to hospitals, clinics, outreach services, pharmacies, grocery stores, and social service organizations.

Vets 4 Vets - \$160,550

Rio Grande Valley, cities of Dallas and Houston

The Vets4Vets Peer Support program helps Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their family members understand the value of peer support and to regularly use peer support to express their emotions, manage their challenges, and ease their reintegration into society.

Department of Texas – VFW – \$40,092

Statewide

The VFW of Texas will host a three-day VA claims counseling and representation training for district service officers of the Texas VFW and American Legion. Once trained, these district service officers will be able to train 800 individual Post service officers. These Post Service Officers are the first line in advising veterans of their entitlements.

For more information about the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance visit <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/TVCFundforVeteransAssistance.html>.

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