



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS

FY 2022 Maryland Veterans Service Animal Grant Program

Notice of Funding Availability Application Guidance Kit

Online Submission Deadline: March 21, 2022 by 3 PM

Funded through:

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

16 Francis Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
veterans.maryland.gov
(410) 260-3838

Larry Hogan, Jr., Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
George W. Owings III, Secretary

ELIGIBILITY

Funding through this solicitation is available to eligible service animal and equine therapy organizations to develop, implement, and support programs for eligible veterans in Maryland.

Link to [Application](#)

Purpose

Thank you for applying for the **FY22 Maryland Veterans Service Animal Grant Program** from the **Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs**. The primary purpose of this program is to develop, implement, and support suicide prevention strategies in Maryland through the training and placement of service animals with veterans and equine therapy for veterans.

If you need application assistance, please contact:

Dana Burl,
Outreach and Advocacy Program Director
Dana.burl@maryland.gov

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs was created by the State Legislature in 1999 as an executive agency with the *mission of assisting veterans, active duty service members, their families and dependents, in securing benefits earned through military service*. The Department's origin follows the history of the Maryland Veterans Commission back to 1924, when the Soldiers' Relief Fund Commission was formed to administer a State relief fund for disabled veterans of World War I.

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I. Eligibility Criteria

Organizations may submit an application under the FY 2022 Maryland Veterans Service Animal Grant Program if they meet the following criteria:

- Maryland based
- Tax exempt by the IRS (501(c)3)
- Trains service dogs for use by eligible veterans OR,
- Provides equine therapy and is a professional accredited or certified program (PATH Premier Member Center Accreditation or Eagala Certified)

Each organization may **only submit one application.**

Applicants are required to use a data-driven, evidence-based approach and clearly describe how the funds will be used. Applicants must include strategies to address veteran mental health and well-being and explain how outcomes data and follow up activities will be used to measure success.

II. Program Description

A. Requiring Agency

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

B. Opportunity Title

FY 2022 Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Grant

C. Submission Date

March 21, 2022 by 3 PM

D. Anticipated Period of Performance

May 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023

E. Funding Opportunity Description

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs anticipates the availability of \$65,000 for the FY 2022 Maryland Veterans Service Animal Grant Program. The office anticipates making up to 10 awards not to exceed the total of \$65,000 for a period of ten months (May 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023). The minimum amount an applicant should request for this project is \$5,000 and the maximum amount is \$10,000.

Please note that applications that do not meet the minimum range noted above or those that exceed the maximum award allocation noted above are subject to removal from consideration during the initial technical review.

The Maryland Veteran Service Animal Program refers eligible veterans who inquire about service animals or equine therapy to nonprofit organizations who provide these services. The program provides additional funding mechanisms to assist organizations who train service animals for veterans and who provide equine therapy to veterans. The program is established to assist in the reduction of the Maryland veteran suicide rate.

See: [2021 Regular Session - Senate Bill 284 Chapter \(maryland.gov\)](#)

The Maryland Veteran Service Animal Program and Fund provides grants to organizations who train service animals for veterans and/or who provide equine therapy to veterans. Successful applicants must detail within their application how the grant will increase opportunities for veterans to receive professionally trained service animals or receive equine therapy, as well as improve mental health, overall well-being and reduce risk of suicide in veterans.

Priorities to be supported by this NOFA are:

- Providing service animals and/or equine therapy to veterans with disabilities in geographic regions where limited opportunities are available for this population.
- Providing in person or web based training for service animal and/or equine therapy providers on military cultural competency, suicide prevention, and mental health in veterans
- Including veteran suicide prevention and mental health subject matter experts in program planning
- Offering provider certification opportunities to add qualified personnel to train service animals or provide equine therapy opportunities for veterans

III. Program Requirements

The purpose of the grant is to help develop, implement, increase and support the training of service animals for veterans and equine therapy to veterans in the State of Maryland in an effort to improve mental health, overall well-being and reduce risk of suicide.

Each of the following core elements must be outlined within the Program application narrative. They are as follows:

- 1. Partnership** – All participants will work in partnership with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the community. These stakeholders are necessary partners in this work and must collaborate to achieve success. The inclusion of federal, state, and local government leaders, neighborhood leaders, and health care providers is also essential. Because of the importance and effectiveness of implementing evidence-based practices, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs encourages a partnership with a research entity—either from within the US Department of Veterans Affairs, health care industry or through academic institutions—to help identify trends, develop targeted strategies, and measure the effectiveness of the program.
- 2. Targeted Strategies** – The Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program requires each successful applicant to utilize evidence-based strategies that target suicide prevention efforts, improve mental health and overall well-being. Successful applicants must identify how funds will complement suicide prevention efforts that improve veteran mental health and overall well-being. Recognizing that mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress, combat related trauma, traumatic brain injury, and physical disability, vary from veteran to veteran, any proposal must be tailored to the diversity of issues presenting in this population, and be data-informed.
- 3. Accountability** – The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs must maintain accountability by measuring results based on an expected outcome as well as numbers of service animals trained and equine therapy sessions provided. Success is measured by the number of veterans served. It is also measured with follow-up to assess how receipt of a service animal or completion of therapy has improved their mental health and overall well-being. Success can also be measured by how many staff have received training as well as measured by an increase in knowledge of military culture and suicide prevention in the military community.

Objectives and Deliverables

The Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program supports the placement of professionally trained service animals with veterans and the provision of equine therapy to veterans, with an emphasis on a strategic problem-solving approach to reduce suicide, improve mental health and overall well-being for veterans. All applications must incorporate each of the following objectives and acknowledge the ability to meet the deliverables during the grant cycle.

Objectives:

1. Establish and implement effective programs and strategies that enable veterans to receive professionally trained service animals or receive equine therapy to effectively and sustainably reduce risk of suicide, improve mental health and overall well-being for veterans.
2. Establish a productive research/ evaluation plan to be integrated into program operations.
3. Foster effective and consistent collaborations with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, with external organizations, and with the communities they serve, in order to increase awareness of the program, as well as to reduce risk of suicide and improve mental health and overall well-being for veterans.
4. Create and maintain collaborations with federal, state, and/or local governments and organizations, with an emphasis on suicide prevention, improving mental health and overall well-being for veterans.

Deliverables:

1. All grant applications must include the project's problem analysis; suicide risk reduction strategy; strategy development and modification, and improved practices. The plan should also identify the specific outcomes to be measured, e.g. number of staff trainings on suicide prevention, military cultural competency, etc., number of veterans placed with service animals; number of veterans completing equine therapy, and self reported improved mental health and overall well-being for veterans. Also, there must be specific measures outlined for determining community participation, e.g. frequency of community outreach; engagements with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs and other government and nonprofit organizations to educate on the program.
2. A final analysis report of the program/project's implementation and outcomes submitted to the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.

IV. Reporting Requirements

Grantees must develop a plan for training service animals or providing equine therapy in a manner consistent with evidence based best practices. This plan must articulate how the applicant plans to meet the requirements above. The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs requires programs and projects to focus on delivering services that show their effectiveness via program outputs and outcomes, therefore directly supporting the goal of reducing the veteran suicide rate and improving the mental health and overall well-being for Maryland veterans.

All grants awarded under this funding opportunity will be required to report on the following mandatory performance measures:

- Number of veterans served
- Number of animals placed with veterans during the reporting period OR
- Number of equine therapy sessions with veterans held
- Increase in overall mental health and well-being of veterans served
- Staff training (if applicable to the grant application project/program)

Post-award recipients will be required to provide the relevant data by submitting a final report through February 28, 2023 by March 30, 2023 or within 30 days of the end of the program/project, whichever date occurs first.

V. Application Process

Applicants are required to apply for grant funding through the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs [Service Animal Program Google Form Application](#).

If you need assistance with completing the program-specific information required in the online application, please contact:

Dana Burl
Outreach and Advocacy Program Director
Dana.burl@maryland.gov

V. Training/ Technical Assistance (TA)

To help applicants prepare and submit applications that reflect the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs' established guidelines and procedures, application instructions are provided.

Applicants are encouraged to review application instructions prior to completing the online application.

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs will conduct a technical assistance conference call to provide further application assistance and to answer questions. The FY 2022 Maryland Veteran Service Animal Grant Program NOFA technical assistance call will be held February 22, 2022 at 10:00AM.

Technical Assistance Call Information

Topic: Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Grant Applicant TA Call

Time: Feb 22, 2022 10:00 AM Eastern Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87583891781?pwd=dWVPOU5HdkQreW5nTnF4clVWRnZ3UT09>

Meeting ID: 875 8389 1781

Passcode: 013900

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,87583891781#,,,,*013900# US (Washington DC)

Important Dates

Application Technical Assistance Conference Call	February 22, 2022
Deadline to Submit an Online Application	March 21, 2022
Letters of Intent Emailed/Denial Letters Emailed	April 14, 2022
Award Documents	April 2022
Award Start Date	May 1, 2022
Award End Date	February 28, 2023
Final Report Due	March 30, 2023

VI. Application Evaluation

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, Behavioral Health Administration, Disabilities and Agriculture will assess the merits of the proposed program/project and score each application accordingly:

- Problem statement/needs justification (15 points total)
- Program/project goals and objectives (25 points total)
- Program/project strategy (20 points total)
- Performance measurement (outputs, outcomes, and impacts) (15 points total)
- Timeline (5 points total)
- Estimated expenses and budget (reasonableness, cost effectiveness, detailed justification per line item) (20 points total)

The FY22 Maryland Veteran Service Animal Grant Program is a competitive application process. The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs will conduct an internal staff and external review of each application submitted in accordance with this Notice of Funding Availability.

VII. Funding Specifications

A. Funding Cycle

Commencement of awards funded under the FY22 Maryland Veteran Service Animal Grant Program will begin May 2022 and end on February 28, 2023. **Grant awards of \$5,000 will be paid in May 2022. Awards of \$5,001 or more will be awarded as follows: \$5,000 in May 2022, balance in October 2022.**

B. Allowable Costs

- Program or project
- Capacity building/operational support (specific to training more service animals and/or increasing equine therapy sessions to veterans)
- Staff workshops and training (specific to military culture/mental health/suicide prevention)

40% of the total request must be used to support direct service to veterans needing support to improve mental health and overall well-being. Salary requests must be directly related to program delivery to veterans needing support to improve mental health and overall well-being.

C. Unallowable Costs

The following services, activities, and costs are not allowed with funding:

- Rent
- Printing costs
- Utilities
- Food/beverage
- Trinkets
- Fundraising
- Lobbying
- Research
- Audit or consulting costs

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs reserves the right to make additional budget reductions and adjustments at its discretion.

VIII. Distribution of Funds & Reporting Requirements

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs will distribute awards to grantees during the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2022 and requires timely submission of a final detailed fiscal and program outcomes report. These reports must be submitted via email to Dana Burl, Outreach Program Director, dana.burl@maryland.gov. The final report is due within 30 calendar days of the end of the grant cycle or when the program/project concludes.

For further post-award instructions, read the special conditions specific to your award in the grant award agreement.

First time vendors will be required to provide and update as necessary vendor

information with the General Accounting Division(GAD)/Comptroller of Maryland.

A. Match

There is no match required for this funding source. **DO NOT ENTER A MATCH INTO YOUR BUDGET.**

B. Transparency and Accountability

A strong emphasis is being placed on accountability and transparency. Grantees must be prepared to track, report on, and document specific outcomes, benefits, and expenditures attributable to the use of grant funds. Misuse of grant funds may result in a range of penalties to include suspension of current and future funds and civil/criminal penalties.

C. Payments

Grantees will receive payments via check from the Maryland Comptroller's Office .

IX. Application Instructions

Section 1:

1. In order to apply, your organization must meet the minimum standards as described in [Title 35 subtitle 6 of the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program](#).
2. Grant requests may range from \$5000-\$10000.
3. Regions are as follows:
 - a. Central: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, Harford County
 - b. Western: Carroll County, Frederick County, Washington County, Allegany County, Garrett County
 - c. Southern: Montgomery County, Calvert County, Charles County, St. Mary's County, Prince George's County
 - d. Eastern: Caroline County, Cecil County, Dorchester County, Kent County, Queen Anne's County, Somerset County, Talbot County, Wicomico County, Worcester County

Section 2: Organization Information

1. Provide your full organization name.
2. Provide your full organization address.
3. Provide the best point of contact and their title.
4. Provide your organization phone number.
5. Provide your best point of contact email address.
6. Provide your organization IRS EIN Number.
7. Indicate if your organization is registered with the Comptroller of Maryland General Accounting Division. (your organization will need to register if you've not already done so. For more information visit: [General Accounting Division \(marylandtaxes.gov\)](http://marylandtaxes.gov))

Section 3: Grant Information

The Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program and Fund provides grants to organizations who train service and/or support animals for veterans and who provide equine therapy to veterans. Applicants must detail within their application how the grant will increase opportunities for veterans to receive professionally trained service or support animals or receive equine therapy, as well as improve mental health, overall well-being and reduce suicide risk in veterans.

1. Indicate if the grant award will address one or more of the indicated priorities.
2. Provide a title for your grant if awarded.
3. Provide the start date for your program/project.
4. Provide the end date for your program/project.
5. Executive summary: provide a problem statement, along with a brief summary of the purpose, objectives, and expected outcomes for the grant, if awarded. This summary will be used for adjudication and communication purposes.
6. Grant award objectives: provide a more detailed description of the issue and how it will be addressed.
7. Provide a description of who will participate in and/or who will benefit from the grant award.

8. Check all boxes that describe the population a grant award will serve.
9. Indicate how frequently your population will take part in grant award activities.

Section 4: Grant Award Requirements

Each of the following core elements must be addressed in this application. Describe each requirement and how a grant award will address partnership, targeted strategies, and accountability.

1. **Partnership:** All participants will work in partnership with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the community. These stakeholders are necessary partners in this work and must collaborate to achieve success. The inclusion of federal, state, and local government leaders, neighborhood leaders, and health care providers is also essential. Because of the importance and effectiveness of implementing evidence-based practices, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs encourages a partnership with a research entity—either from within the US Department of Veterans Affairs, health care industry or through academic institutions—to help identify trends, develop targeted strategies, and measure the effectiveness of the program. Describe how your organization will partner with the community to ensure evidence based practices are implemented during the life cycle of your project/program.
2. **Targeted Strategies:** The Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program requires each successful applicant to utilize evidence-based strategies that target suicide prevention efforts, improve mental health and overall well-being. Successful applicants must identify how funds will complement suicide prevention efforts that improve veteran mental health and overall well-being. Recognizing that mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress, combat related trauma, traumatic brain injury, and physical disability, vary from veteran to veteran, any proposal must be tailored to the diversity of issues presenting in this population, and be data-informed. Describe how your organization will implement strategies that are data informed and target suicide prevention efforts, improving mental health and overall well-being.
3. **Accountability:** The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs must maintain accountability by measuring results based on an outcome as well as numbers of service animals trained and equine therapy sessions provided. Success is measured by the number of veterans served and with follow-up, how receipt of a service animal or completion of therapy has improved their mental health and overall well-being. Describe how your organization will measure success, how outcomes will be measured, and how follow up with veteran clients will be conducted to assess for continued and improved mental health and well-being. Success can also be measured by how many staff have received training as well as measured by an increase in knowledge of military culture and suicide prevention in the military community.

Section 5: Activities, Expected Results, and Measurement

1. **Grant award activities and timelines:** List the major activities that will occur during the life of the grant. For each activity provide estimated start and end dates.

2. Expected results: Describe expected outcomes, benefits, and/or results the organization and/or participants will achieve from a grant award.
3. Measurement: Describe how grant award activities will be measured, how overall success will be evaluated, and how participant experience/outcomes will be evaluated.

Section 6: Budget

Provide all estimated grant activity expenses. Clearly indicate how a grant award will be spent during the life of the grant. Grant awards will range between \$5000-\$10000 and can be used for a program or project, capacity building/operational support, personnel workshops or training

1. Use the template provided to create the estimated expense sheet. Once you have created and completed the sheet, upload the file to the application. The file type must be a PDF.

Section 7: Supporting Documentation

All applications must include two professional letters of reference and proof of 501(c)3 status. Reference letters must include contact information for the reference, to include name, phone, and email. If applicable, provide proof of professional accreditation (PATH Premier Member Center or Eagala)

Section 8: Application Submission

By submitting your application, your organization is confirming it meets the basic eligibility criteria to apply for a Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Grant. You accept the program requirements and confirm that to the best of your knowledge the information contained in the application is complete and accurate. You agree that if the grant award activities are not completed as described in the application your organization may be required to return a portion or all of the grant award to the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. Misuse of funds may also result in civil/criminal penalties. You agree that your organization will submit all required reports during the life of the grant including a final report.

Please direct questions regarding the application to Dana Burl, Outreach and Advocacy Program Director, MDVA, dana.burl@maryland.gov

Applications that are incomplete or incorrect will result in the application not being considered for funding.

X. Final Report Instructions

All grants awarded under this funding opportunity will be required to report on the following mandatory performance measures:

- Number of veterans served
- Number of animals placed with veterans during the reporting period OR
- Number of equine therapy sessions with veterans held
- Increase in overall mental health and well-being of veterans served
- Staff training (if applicable to the grant application project/program)

Post-award recipients will be required to provide the relevant information and data by submitting performance metrics through February 28, 2023 by March 30, 2023 or within 30 days of the end of the program/project, whichever date occurs first.

The report should include the following:

- Project/program executive summary- What did the organization do? Describe the program/project. What were the benefits to participants? If the program/project was designed to focus on a particular subset of the veteran population, include how many participated.
- Grant spending- Provide a breakdown of how grant money was spent. Include copies of receipts/invoices detailing how the grant was spent to include a brief description of purchases/expenditures. If any grant funds were spent differently than intended, explain how the funds were still used to facilitate the program/project described in the application.
- Evaluation- How did the organization collect information/feedback/data on program/project outcomes? What problems were experienced? How were these problems resolved? Did the funding get spent exactly as planned? If not, why? Were there changes or improvements to the planned program/project? What would the organization do differently in the future?
- Benefits to participants- How did participants benefit from the program/project? Did the organization achieve the goals for the program/project? Provide evidence to support achievements.
- Photos and other supporting documents- Provide any photos, quotes, fliers or other documents that support the program/project's success. If photos or quotes are included, it is expected that sharing permission will be granted in advance of including them in the report.
- Conclusion- Summarize in a final paragraph the problem statement, project/project description, and outcomes at the conclusion of the grant period.

[Access the final report Google form here.](#)