



NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR ARTS & HEALTH IN THE MILITARY

ARTS DEPLOYED:

An Action Guide for Community Arts & Military Programming



"Strength Deployed"
Climbing from the dark
From war and
Through the thick
We found the light
The goals are
Far at the top

This mural represents our journey
the mural, there are several
painting that describe our
depression, shame, fear
appear on the canvas. You
even beyond the horizon.



A Message from Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO, Americans for the Arts

In 2011, Americans for the Arts collaborated with Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and more than a dozen national, state, and local arts and nonprofit service organizations on the first National Summit: Arts in Healing for Wounded Warriors, held at Walter Reed Bethesda and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE). Gathering at the height of the combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, we asked the more than 250 military, Veteran, and arts and health leaders participating: how can the arts help mitigate the significant challenges confronting the military?

What we heard from the military and Veteran leaders in the room that day was not only that the arts matter to the recovery of our wounded warriors, but they are also essential to helping build health and resiliency among the larger circle of family and caregivers who share their lives. These leaders challenged us to not just talk—but to take action. Thus out of the roots of that first convening, the [*National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military*](#) was born.

Armed with a new energy and urgency, we convened a national roundtable of high level leaders across sectors in 2012 to imagine a new framework for military/civilian collaboration for increasing access to the arts, resulting in the first [*Blueprint for Action*](#). These leaders recognized that while national action must be taken, real change and impact on the health and lives of members of the military and Veteran communities can only be fully realized on the local level.

Since then, we have been reaching out to and working with numerous new partners and allies joining forces in the cause, including federal agencies, national service organizations, and arts, health and philanthropic leaders. Working together, we are developing strategies and tools to help break down the significant challenges to greater public/private collaboration that is the result of decades of the pervasive and persistent military and civilian divide.

This is where involvement of our local arts agency leaders and their community partners becomes critical. Achieving our goal of creating greater access to the arts for the health and well-being of all military servicemembers, Veterans, their families and caregivers—no matter where they live, serve, or work in this great nation—cannot happen without all community partners fully engaged.

This guide is a first step in helping us engage and support you as you embark on this mission. We know that many of our local arts agencies are already at work in military and Veteran communities. Some of you are still in the early stages of outreach, while others are looking to do more. Many of you are funding projects or supporting artist residencies, providing information or making policy connections with mayors, military bases, or Veterans Affairs offices or service organizations. The local demographics may call on you to serve active duty military, or those recently returned from combat arenas. Others must come to understand the unique multi-generational challenges of our Veterans from earlier wars, some fought more than 50 years ago.

Wherever you are in your process, we hope this guide helps you take one step further. Breaking down the divide is not easy. The work is not without its challenges. At Americans for the Arts, we sum up our mission as “All the Arts for All the People” because we believe in their value to transform lives as well as communities. More than ever we are being called to help bridge the military and civilian divide through the arts, in service to members of our own communities who are in need of them—whether to heal, to reconnect, or to discover a new career or life path. No one can accomplish this mission alone, but by working together and doing what we do best, there is no doubt we can be a force for good.



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1

INTRODUCTION

Why Deploy the Arts?

The connection between the arts and the military has always been strong, rooted in the shared history we have as a people and a nation. From the music and words of *America the Beautiful*, the painting of *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, the photograph and subsequent United States Marine Corps War Memorial of *Raising the Flag at Iwo Jima*, the spontaneous painting and naming of aircrafts by airmen in the field, the deployed soldiers strumming guitars for respite or solace—art defines our human experience and every solemn or joyous occasion we have in our national, family, and individual lives.

For servicemembers, Veterans, and their families, participation in the arts—whether for expressive, educational, recreational, or therapeutic purposes—is proven to build resilience, enhance coping skills, increase self-esteem, and generate well-being. The arts also promote community reintegration and raise awareness about the experiences and struggles of these populations. If you'd like to delve further into research documenting the benefits of using the arts in military and Veteran communities, please read our white paper, [Arts, Health, and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum](#).

This movement is encouraged by the Americans for the Arts [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military](#) (NIAHM), which promotes greater access to the arts for servicemembers, Veterans, and their families because of these powerful, positive outcomes. NIAHM partners and works collaboratively with numerous artists and arts organizations who are serving military and Veteran populations at every stage of the military continuum—from pre-deployment through post-deployment reintegration into the community.

All across the country, creative arts therapists are working in military and Veteran healthcare facilities to help address the impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). In local cultural centers, schools, rehabilitation centers, and other community locations, artists are helping servicemembers, Veterans, and their families express themselves

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and find new ways to connect with each other and the greater community. Veteran artists are transcending the military/civilian divide by helping us all better understand the military experience in their own voice and through their own creations. The arts are recognized and utilized as a tool to empower servicemembers, Veterans, and their families to reclaim their own narratives and their health.

The Role of Local Arts Agencies

Local arts agencies (LAAs) are uniquely positioned as the creative nucleus within any community to connect servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers to artists and creative arts therapists for meaningful collaboration and healing. This guide is intended to help LAAs catalyze their position—as connector, supporter, and arts advocate—to begin to serve local military and Veteran populations through the arts. While highly effective and robust arts and military programs do exist across the country, the demand for these services far exceeds their number. LAAs can help fill this gap for servicemembers, Veterans, families, and caregivers who could benefit from arts experiences, but are not receiving them.

This guide offers a step-by-step process to help LAAs begin making arts and military connections that can yield new opportunities for servicemembers, Veterans, and their families to experience the healing power of the arts. It also provides blueprints of successful national, regional, and local arts and military programming that can be replicated in any community. With the proper motivation, training, connection to information and resources, and access to partners in the military and Veteran communities, LAAs, arts organizations, and artists can make a powerful difference.

FROM THE [2015 AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS LOCAL ARTS AGENCY CENSUS](#):

One quarter of the 4,500 LAAs surveyed indicated that they engage in arts and military programming through their own programs or the programs of their grantees.

Top 5 Reasons the Arts Benefit the Military and Veteran Populations

- 1 The arts are good for the body and mind.** The arts play a powerful role in helping to address the physiological and psychological impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Research shows that arts interventions help the brain reorganize and adapt, improve recovery of function, increase resilience to injury, and reduce stress and anxiety.
- 2 The arts promote socialization.** Participating in expressive activities addresses a PTSD symptom called emotional numbing, a lack of interest in activities, withdrawal, detachment, and reduced emotional expressiveness. Arts activities offered in a group setting foster connection and socialization. Many activities are also facilitated by fellow servicemembers and Veterans, creating a safe space for participants to connect over a range of experiences.
- 3 The arts foster positive, meaningful relationships.** The arts can be used to build resilience and coping skills for servicemembers, as well as strengthen bonds and help facilitate communication among military family members. Arts programming can offer choice, empowerment, and the chance for servicemembers, Veterans, and their families to accept, embrace, and celebrate their military experience in a positive social and emotional way.
- 4 The arts are an effective, alternative means of communication.** In arts-based activity, servicemembers, Veterans, and their family members can experience and express their thoughts at their own pace, and through their choice of medium. When words fail, processing the experience in a painting or through music not only communicates an individual's story, but also offers therapeutic benefits in the process of artmaking itself.
- 5 The arts enhance the quality of life of individuals, communities, and the greater society.** The arts are universal and often dubbed the “great equalizer”—anyone can participate in some form of artmaking or arts experience at any age or location, despite socioeconomic circumstance or background. When people engage in art, they change and grow, and by extension, their communities become more vital and connected. The arts have been essential in helping bridge the military/civilian divide that often stands in the way of individual and collective healing.

How Artists and Arts Organizations Are “Of Service” to Military and Veteran Populations

A vast range of multidisciplinary artists and arts practitioners are involved in serving the military and Veteran populations, so it is important to understand their unique, and often complementary, roles. When thinking about the type of arts programming you’d like to bring to your local servicemembers and Veterans, take into consideration the ways each role functions:

Are you looking to provide servicemembers, Veterans, and their families with artmaking experience for relaxation, enjoyment, and recreation?

Independent artists and nonprofit arts organizations provide arts instruction, facilitate artmaking, and/or document and reflect back military servicemembers’ and Veterans’ life experiences for enjoyment, relaxation, inspiration, and morale building. They may be civilians, servicemembers, or Veterans interested in sharing their artistic talents and helping servicemembers, Veterans, and their family members discover their own artistic interests and talents. The art they deliver contributes to both individual and group well-being, and it fosters community engagement.

Are you interested in partnering with a healthcare facility to deliver arts programming to patients?

Artists working within healthcare settings are practicing, professional artists from many disciplines who can facilitate the creative process in hospitals, outpatient clinics, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, and more. They may be directly involved with these healthcare facilities, or work through social agencies, nonprofit arts organizations, local arts agencies, and other providers. An Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program is one formalized way that artists can be found working within healthcare settings. AIRs can work independently through hospital arts and

Types of Arts Activities for Military and Veteran Populations:

- » Classes, workshops, drop-in sessions
- » Gathering and sharing activities (e.g., open mics, performances and talk-backs, art walks)
- » Recreational or professional artmaking
- » Artist entrepreneur classes, training, general support
- » Community arts projects (e.g., mural making)
- » Therapeutic arts or creative arts therapy programs¹
- » Exhibitions, performances, and publications

1. Here, “therapeutic” programs refer to arts programs/activities which may have therapeutic value but where artistic and expressive outcomes are the main goal. This is distinct from creative art therapy programs delivered by board-certified, registered, and/or licensed creative arts therapists that address specific therapeutic needs for patients or clients, and involve a process of assessment, treatment, and evaluation.

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healing programs or can be sponsored by local arts agencies and/or nonprofit organizations that provide training and supervision for the artists to work with the military and Veteran populations. Often these artists work closely and in collaboration with creative arts therapists on staff at military treatment facilities and Veterans Health Services to extend the creative, expressive, and educational opportunities available to servicemembers, Veterans, and their families.

Are you looking to achieve targeted medical and health-related outcomes via the arts?

Creative arts therapists are individual artists who are highly trained arts and health professionals, board-certified, registered and/or licensed to use the wide range of arts modalities and creative processes to achieve specific clinical and health-related outcomes. As clinicians, or as part of a treatment team, they design programs for patients that address clinical needs and are able to chart goals and outcomes of sessions in patient record systems. Creative Arts Therapy specialties include: art, music, dance/movement, poetry, and psychodrama. Each discipline has professional training standards, a formal credentialing process, continuing educational requirements, clinical practice standards, and a code of ethics.

Are you looking to increase access to arts experiences in military/Veteran community? At the community level, arts experiences for servicemembers, Veterans, and their families can occur in a wide variety of settings. *Consider the following sites for your initiative: community centers, cultural centers, hospice programs, long-term care communities, mental health programs, military bases, museums and other arts facilities, prisons, psychiatric-forensic units, rehabilitation treatment centers, schools, special-needs camps, Veterans' facilities, and wellness programs.* Assess how you can encourage local cultural organizations and community groups to connect and partner to provide new opportunities for the military and Veteran community. When working in mental health or treatment centers, ensure that artists are paired with appropriate healthcare professionals like social workers, psychiatrists, or creative arts therapists to help facilitate difficult situations, and have access to training in military and Veteran cultural competence.

Working with the Military and Veteran Community

More than 26 million Americans from across the country are part of the U.S. military, Veteran, and military family communities. Servicemembers and Veterans come from all walks of life, generations, educational backgrounds, races, and ethnicities. Just as every individual is unique, every servicemember, Veteran, or family member will have a particular creative outlet that captures their attention. Given the size and diversity of the population, there are endless opportunities for artists and arts organizations to connect their creative services to the greater military and Veteran communities.

“Military recruitment disproportionately targets young people of color and working class families. As more and more servicemembers return home with lasting physical, emotional, and psychological injuries, we must face the impact of our choices as a society, and confront what these 10 years and counting of war and violence have done to us as a nation...”

—Andrea Assaf, founder of Art2Action and Director of *Speed Killed My Cousin*

SPOTLIGHT:

Engaging Veterans in Your Community Through the Arts

Check out the video of the 2014 Americans for the Arts Annual Convention Session “Engaging Military Veterans in Your Community Through the Arts,” moderated by Marete Wester and including panelists Andrea Assaf, Linda Parris-Bailey, and Rachel Brink talking about their collaborative arts and military programming in Tampa, FL.

The Benefit of the Arts to Military and Veteran Subpopulations

While the arts can benefit *all* members of the military and Veteran populations, there are subsets of the population who face particular challenges, and for whom the healing properties of the arts can be especially beneficial.

When developing your programming, assess whether your community includes people in the following subpopulations and consider intentional programming for them.

Substance Use Disorders: Drugs and alcohol are commonly turned to as coping mechanisms for those with PTSD, and combat exposure is linked to an increase in alcohol and substance abuse.

Homeless Veterans: Roughly 12 percent of the adult homeless population are male Veterans who suffer from mental illness or alcohol and/or substance abuse issues. About 40 percent of homeless Veterans are African-American or Hispanic, despite being a minority of Veterans on the whole.

Incarcerated Veterans: Veterans make up 8 percent of all state and federal inmates. Incarcerated Veterans with combat experience are 4x more likely to be diagnosed with a mental disorder than non-Veterans. In many communities, intervention and treatment for PTSD and drug abuse is available in lieu of jail time for some offenses through “Veterans Courts,” such as [Justice for Vets](#).

Mental Disorders: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), depression, and suicide are widely recognized and studied within the military community. All may co-occur with alcohol and/or substance abuse. According to the National Institute of Mental Health,

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PROGRAM FOR MILITARY CHILDREN: The BRAT Art Insitute

The *BRAT Art Institute* is the first multidisciplinary art institute for “military brats”—children who grew up with parents serving in the United States Armed Forces. Based in Virginia, the Institute hosts art camps and workshops, professional development for teachers and counselors who work with military youth, community forums in which artwork and educational curricula are shared, as well as a library of military brat art, history, and research, ensuring military brat art and culture is not lost or ignored. It also honors the service and sacrifice of military youth by giving them a voice in their own narrative, history, and future.

since 2003, in the Army alone, suicide has doubled and now exceeds the civilian rate (*Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers*, 2014).

Military and Veteran Caregivers: Since 2001, there are more than 1.1 million caregivers in the United States, often the partner of the servicemember/Veteran, mostly employed outside the home, and often caring for a servicemember/Veteran with behavioral or emotional health problems.

Military Sexual Trauma: About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 100 men have experienced military sexual trauma. Women are more likely to develop PTSD from military sexual trauma than from combat exposure.

Military Spouses: Deployment affects the whole family. The top stressors for military families are separation, finances, employment, and isolation from friends and family.

Military Children: More than 2 million children have either one or both parents at war. Though children gain positive impacts from the experience, like increased adaptability, resilience, independence, and personal growth, negative impacts may include separation anxiety, worry, irritability, difficulty sleeping, and difficulty concentrating.

Wounded Warriors: With advancements in medical technology, many servicemembers are returning home, but are physically wounded, suffering from amputations, burns, spinal cord injuries, and sensory impairments.

Source: *Creating a Culture of Equity for Veterans' Mental Health, Common Health ACTION October 2014*

PROGRAM FOR MILITARY SPOUSES AND CHILDREN: Blue Star Museums

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and museums across America. Each summer since 2010, Blue Star Museums have offered free admission to the nation’s active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve, from Memorial Day through Labor Day. [Learn more and find participating museums in your area.](#)

Preparing to Work with Servicemembers and Veterans

War and combat are experiences civilians can't imagine—in the field, servicemembers operate in a world with set rules, ethics, and demands. Homecoming involves re-creating oneself and setting new goals in a less structured world. Art experiences should be non-judgmental and life-affirming, providing opportunities to re-focus participants in a positive and person-centered way.

Pursue special training before working with at-risk Veterans and servicemembers.

Free and low-cost online courses and webinars are listed on the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) resource page](#), including the [Center for Deployment Psychology and the Citizen Soldier Support Program](#). Programs serving regional areas such as the Warrior Writers Program in the Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Boston areas, provide [workshops for training and consultation](#).

To initially prepare to work with servicemembers and Veterans, consider these basic guidelines:

- » Remember that Veterans came from all walks of life and experiences before joining the service.
- » Be careful about thanking a Veteran for their service unless you have a relationship with him or her. It is not always evident if their experience has been positive or negative and reactions may vary.
- » Don't press any Veteran for details of service unless they offer information. Build trust by listening.
- » Put aside political affiliations and personal opinions regarding war.
- » Be flexible in scheduling. Veterans navigate a complicated VA health and benefits system and scheduling conflicts will happen.
- » Take the time to talk individually with Veterans experiencing distress, as art experiences can surface painful memories and unresolved emotions, even many years after service. If you are in a healthcare facility, seek a mental health partner—social worker, psychiatrist or creative arts therapist—to help navigate moments like these.
- » Do not assume the role of a therapist or counselor unless you are professionally qualified. Let the Veteran know that you are there to help and can lead them to the resources they may need.

If a Veteran seems to be severely depressed, suicidal, or is having other significant problems call the Veterans Crisis Line, 1-800-273-8255, available 24/7, 365 days a year. You can also contact your local VA Medical Center if the situation is not as serious. [Give an Hour](#) is also a useful resource for participants who need mental health counseling, but lack the funds to do so.

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BUILDING YOUR OWN MILITARY OR VETERAN CREATIVE ARTS INITIATIVE

It's time to mobilize resources within your community to create arts programming for the military and Veteran populations to promote health, healing, and well-being. The options for building a creative arts initiative for your community's military and Veteran populations are robust. This section will guide you through assessing the needs of your community to inform your programming, propose strategies for gaining funding and support, and provide helpful tips on making connections across sectors to ensure the success and longevity of your efforts.

Getting Started

Before embarking on a new creative arts initiative, it is always wise to check if there has been any precedent in your community. Inquiring with other local arts groups, military installations, Veteran service organizations (VSO), and even city government agencies will help you avoid duplicate programming and provide a solid base of information from which to move forward.

Community Cultural Planning

Because local arts agencies are usually the leaders of community cultural planning, they have often already identified local creative assets. Ideally the military and Veteran populations were included in the planning process, which may give you a head start in understanding if—and how—the military and Veteran populations are being creatively served in your area.


Part 2: Building Your Own Military or Veteran Creative Arts Initiative

- » If a community cultural planning process is currently underway, consider how you may work with military and Veteran service organizations to assess the needs of this population to better understand the opportunities for serving them through the arts.
- » If you do not have a local community cultural plan that has included military and Veteran populations, check to see if your **state arts agency** has conducted a survey or arts asset mapping focused on military and/or Veterans programs or is working with military and/or Veteran services agencies at the state level.

TIP: Search for existing programs using the Americans for the Arts [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military's National Network Directory](#) and the [National Guild for Community Arts Education Member Directory](#) to find programs that might be near you. Also check out the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' (NASAA) [State Arts & Military Initiatives Strategy Sampler](#). If a program or facility already exists, ask to join. If a gap in services exists, create your own programming!

Checklist for Creating Military and Veteran Creative Arts Programming

1 **Connect with servicemembers and Veterans** to hear directly about their interests and needs for arts programming. Reach out to Veteran Affairs (VA) Medical Centers, community-based outpatient clinics, long-term care/residential facilities, homeless shelters, and/or transitional living facilities. Veteran service organizations like American Legions, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) centers, and college campus Veteran centers are also places to connect. Check out the Points of Connection list ([page 15](#)) for details on more sites to connect you to the military and Veteran communities.

 Visit **Appendix A** for a list of starter questions to ask when you first reach out to the military and Veteran populations.

TIP: Be inclusive! When connecting with the military and Veteran communities, and your community at large, keep the door open and welcome everyone to the table. Also make sure your meeting spaces are handicap accessible and, when possible, served by public transportation.

2 **Connect with the creative community** by identifying interested artists and leaders from arts/cultural organizations who are motivated to work with the military and Veteran populations. This includes artists and creatives within the military community.

 Visit **Appendix B** for a list of starter questions to ask your local creative community.

3 Establish a steering committee that includes military and Veteran members, their family and caregivers, Veteran service organizations (VSOs), artists and creatives, and medical personnel when necessary. Pursuing partnerships across sectors will ensure the success and longevity of your efforts.



Visit **Appendix C** for a sample agenda for your first steering committee meeting.

TIP: A first step for your steering committee could be to create a directory of local arts organizations and artists who are interested in working with the military and Veteran populations. Get this into the hands of the military and Veteran community so they have a quick reference to know what's possible and who to contact.

4 Consider other community partners who can play a vital role in delivering and/or hosting programs. Public spaces like libraries, parks and recreation spaces, and schools are common host sites for military and Veteran programming. Connect with local gallery and studio owners, theater companies, and others to invite their involvement.

5 Define the goals for your programs and services by calling on the various perspectives and expertise of steering committee members. This process of goal defining and shaping programming often results in activity as members make connections and identify areas for collaboration. For more ambitious programs, planning will need to address needs and priorities, how to build the program, where to find the resources, and long-term goals.

6 Establish ongoing operations for your steering committee. Map out leadership roles, future meetings, and communications to keep the group connected and collaborating.

7 Share your plans with the community via public meetings, forums, and opportunities that can help community members understand your initiative, its intent, and the benefits it will be bringing to the local military and Veteran populations, as well as everyone working with them.

8 Communicate opportunities to the military and Veteran communities with targeted outreach and messaging. Take into account what has been learned from your initial conversations with those communities as you and your steering committee members promote your activities and programs. Also think about the ways to promote your program and make it visible.



Visit **Appendix D** for a checklist of promotion strategies that you and your steering committee can pursue.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

All the Way Home

In Portland, ME, Executive Director of *Art at Work* Marty Pottenger established “All the Way Home,” a story-exchange project aimed at giving Veterans in Maine a chance to recount and process their military experiences. In partnership with the Portland Veteran’s Center and the Maine Military and Community Network, Pottenger hosted storytelling workshops for Veterans that helped them articulate their experiences and present their history via performances, readings, story circles, and civic dialogues.

[Learn more.](#)

“(The exchanges) make it clear to Veterans that someone is listening to their stories. There’s a real sense of community, a feeling of welcome, respect and human connection, but also lightheartedness,”
said Pottenger to the *Bangor Daily News*

Points of Connection

The following sites can connect you to servicemembers, Veterans, their families, caregivers, community leaders, and artists as collaborators and/or participants in your program.

Military Bases and Units: To find military bases in your area, check out the Department of Defense’s [Military Installations online portal](#) where all bases are listed with contact information. Local National Guard units can be found using the [Joint Services Support website](#). Bases and units are great places to begin to make connections.

Family Centers and Advocacy Programs: Each military branch hosts Family Centers and Advocacy Programs that sponsor Family Readiness Groups (FRG). FRGs include family members, servicemembers, civilian employees, and community members who provide activities and support to assist servicemembers and families before, during, and after deployment. Consider joining your local FRG meetings to connect with group members in person and ask them about their interest in arts programming.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Facilities: There are several types of VA facilities that you may find in and around your community including VA Medical Centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), and Vet Centers. Use the [Department of Veterans Affairs Directory](#) to find facilities in your area. Some VA facilities have a recreational/creative arts therapy department, which can be a first point of connection. Local Voluntary Service Offices at the VA can open doors and facilitate local partnerships.

Community-Based Affinity Organizations: Search the [United States Department of Veterans Affairs VSO Directory](#) to locate local chapters of specific Veteran groups such as: [The American Legion](#), [American Legion Auxiliary](#), [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#), [Wounded Warrior Project](#), [Blinded Veterans Association](#), [Women Veteran Associations](#), [Homeless Veteran facilities](#), [the Native American Veterans Association](#), [The Society of Hispanic Veterans](#), [The National Association for Black Veterans](#), and many more.

College and Universities: Consider getting in touch with creative arts programs/departments at your local college and/or university. Professors and students are potential volunteers and instructors, and campus art facilities could be a possible site for hosting your program. Investigate whether your college or university has an office serving students who are Veterans, or a student Veterans committee to gather information about what their needs are.

Current Programs from State and Local Arts Agencies

Check out these excellent examples of state and local arts agencies that are engaging their military and Veteran communities in arts programming and reference the [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military's National Network Directory](#) for an even more comprehensive list.

Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture of Maryland

GLEN ECHO, MD

At Glen Echo Park, military servicemembers and their families can explore their creativity and experiment with different media and techniques through day and evening workshops. During the summer, free events include weekly concerts, often featuring military bands. The Partnership supports events for military Veterans and families by hosting the “Serving Together Resource Fair” to increase collaboration with community groups directly serving Veterans. Glen Echo also works with military/Veteran communities to present an annual exhibition of artwork created by servicemembers and Veterans in November during Veterans Day. The partnership is funded by the Maryland State Arts Council, Montgomery County government, and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

The Oklahoma Arts and the Military Initiative

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK



Participants in the Oklahoma Arts & Military Initiative program.

The Oklahoma Arts Council (OAC) began its Arts and Military Initiative as an effort to serve members of Oklahoma's military community, who make up nearly 10 percent of all residents in the state. In partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Veterans

Affairs and Norman's Firehouse Art Center, the OAC piloted a series of arts learning workshops at the Norman Veterans Center in 2016. Led by professional teaching artists, the program featured photography, creative writing, and visual art workshops, each lasting 10 weeks. The OAC also presented the Oklahoma Arts and Military Summit as a day-long pre-conference session of the 2016 Oklahoma Arts Conference to provide a forum for staff from arts and Veterans organizations, as well as teaching artists, to network and learn how to better serve members of Oklahoma's military community through the arts.

Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County

FAYETTEVILLE, NC

Fayetteville, NC is home to one of the nation's largest military communities, and the city's Arts Council aims to embrace all active-duty, retired, Veteran, and family members. The Arts Council facilitates the Artists in Schools program for all Department of Defense schools in Ft. Bragg, collaborates with the Army Ground Forces Band, and partners with on- and off-post museums on exhibitions. In 2011, the Council worked with all 100 North Carolina counties, reaching 400 Veterans, their families, and community members to produce 51 pieces of public art for the North Carolina State Veterans Park in Fayetteville. The Council worked with artists who created service walls using military salvage materials and provides continued support of the park that hosts more than 50,000 visitors annually. Fayetteville's military and Veteran populations are also deeply integrated with the local cultural industry, serving as board members, volunteers, and musicians with the Fayetteville Symphony Orchestra, performers with the Cape Fear Regional Theatre, and more.

The Arts Council of Wayne County

GOLDSBORO, NC

In North Carolina, the Arts Council of Wayne County (ACWC) is located just five miles from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (SJAFB) and proudly serves military members and their families with a variety of classes, events, and exhibits. Over the years, the organization has enjoyed a relationship with SJAFB personnel and families. Because ACWC staff members are either military spouses or retired military, they understand the opportunities, struggles, and demands of military life.

At right: a servicemember provides art instruction to Wayne County children in shelters after the 2016 Hurricane Matthew floods.



California Arts Council's Veterans Initiative in the Arts

SACRAMENTO, CA

Through the Veterans Initiative in the Arts (VIA), the California Arts Council seeks to increase equity, access, and opportunities for Veterans in California to participate in arts programming that is sensitive and responsive to their unique experiences. VIA provides project and partnership support of up to \$10,000 for nonprofit arts organizations, local arts agencies, and Veterans' assistance agencies to reach Veterans, active military, and their families. Each year, approximately 30 grants are awarded to California-based organizations providing quality arts programming for Veterans. Grantees have included Combat Arts San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, San Francisco Veterans Mural Project, and more.

The Fine Arts Center's Military & the Arts Program

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO



Participants in The Colorado Fine Arts Center's Military Healing Program.

The Fine Arts Center (FAC) has been offering Military Healing Programs for the Colorado Springs community since 2007. The programs are designed to educate the community about the power arts can have in the healing process through a variety of award-winning artistic courses for area Veterans and active-duty servicemembers and their families. Each year, work created in these courses is showcased in exhibits for the community. The FAC also provides military discounts for museums and theater as a Blue Star Program participant.

Funding Your Program

Both a challenge and an opportunity you have in creating an arts and military program is to make sure that it has attractive power for resources. And the more you aspire to produce a meaningful program with impact and longevity, the more resources you will need. Here you will learn how to pursue funding that best fits your program's goals, think outside the box when researching funding sources, and gain tips for navigating both the private and public funding sectors.

Pursuing funding for your arts programming will commonly fall under one of the following three areas:

1 Resources for the activity itself

Funding to make the actual program happen, with money going toward paying artists, materials, exhibition expenses, etc.

2 Resources to support collective design and delivery

Funding to support the collaborative work of partners who come together to design and implement programs.

3 Resources to support long-term sustainability

Committed funding that will help establish a program model and regular delivery.

Think Creatively: Tips for Looking Outside the Box

- » Is arts and military/Veteran programming a priority for your organization? If so, look within your budget to see which aspects can be covered in operational costs, and which require new funding. Funding sources will evaluate your commitment, in part, based upon what the institution is willing to allocate in terms of existing resources.
- » Some military and Veteran hospitals may have resources for community programs within *their* budget, but haven't yet made the connection to local arts organizations and artists. Consider letting them know about the types of activities available.
- » Ask your steering committee members to look at resources in their respective sectors. Sharing funding responsibility in this way increases the odds of finding support.
- » Are there local corporations and/or foundations that already support servicemembers and Veterans? If so, reach out to them and make the case for the powerful, transformative power of the arts. Help them see the arts as part of the solution to the problems they are trying to solve.
- » Individual giving has the potential to attract dollars, but it requires dedication. Make sure you have a steering committee member (or two) to set up and pursue a campaign, track income, send out thank-yous, and manage where the money is allocated.

Part 2: Building Your Own Military or Veteran Creative Arts Initiative

- » Reach out to local chapters of civic organizations like the Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Elks Lodge, and Junior League, as well as local business groups like the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association to identify individuals who may be interested in stepping up to help you raise funds. Most of these associations will have a sub-committee or a person dedicated to serving the needs of Veterans. Inquire about having a conversation or doing a presentation on your offerings for these leaders.
- » Think broad: arts programming for military and Veteran communities crosses over public and private funding sectors (arts, military, Veterans, health) and funding opportunities can be found in all of those sectors, locally, regionally, and nationally.

TIP: Pay artists! While many people are happy to volunteer their time for servicemembers and Veterans, artists are being called on to offer their professional skills. Remember: their work is their livelihood and they should be compensated fairly. This includes Veterans who are artists, and may be running their own nonprofit organizations or small businesses.

Private Sector Funding: Individuals, Foundations, and Corporations

Tips for Private Grant Funding

- » Check large foundations and corporations for military initiatives. [*The Council on Foundations*](#) encourages foundation investment in the needs of servicemembers and Veterans through their [*Supporting Veterans and Military Families Initiative*](#).
- » Think “Health & Well-Being.” This broader category is a funding priority for many private foundations. Emphasize and speak to the positive health outcomes that your program creates when pursuing funding through this category.
- » Understand the priorities of the individual donor or the foundation. Often foundations focus on serving a specific Veteran, such as those returning from the most recent conflicts (Iraq and Afghanistan), or addressing signature wounds of war, such as TBI and PTSD. Others may focus on military families and children, or serving women Veterans. Local foundations in particular will be sensitive to the specific needs of the military and Veteran population within their community.
- » Check out [*Grantmakers in the Arts*](#) (GIA) and [*Grantmakers in Health*](#) (GIH), two excellent resources covering both sectors.

In Hartford, CT, United Healthcare, in partnership with the Greater Hartford Arts Council, provides grants to Veterans and their families as part of their Arts & Wellness program. [*Find out more!*](#)

Part 2: Building Your Own Military or Veteran Creative Arts Initiative

- » Be aware that grantmakers with regional names may actually fund nationally. For example, the [New England Foundation for the Arts](#) (NEFA) funds arts & military programs nationally. Similarly, the Cleveland Foundation Center has [a searchable online directory](#) comprised of sources all across the country.
- » Think about the ways businesses can support military and Veterans arts initiatives. Americans for the Arts [pARTnership Movement](#) connects businesses and arts organizations to create mutually beneficial relationships that strengthen both parties. The site features tools and resources to help arts organizations approach, plan, and execute financially beneficial partnerships with businesses.

Public Sector Funding: Local, State, and Federal Government

FROM THE [2015 AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY](#):

70 percent of American adults are especially likely to favor government arts funding to aid returning military personnel in their transition back to civilian life.

Tips for Public Grant Funding

- » Check out your state arts agency and/or your state humanities council for funding opportunities. Visit the [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Directory](#) and the [Federation of State Humanities Councils](#) to find contact information.
- » Check out federal public funding sources like the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA), the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) (NEH), and [Grants.gov](#) which houses information on more than 1,000 federal grant programs, including those for Veterans.
- » If your project will have a research component that looks at the arts for health in the military check out the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH), which is the largest funder of biomedical research in the world.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

Ancient Greeks / Modern Lives

The National Endowment for the Humanities funds a nationwide program, [Ancient Greeks/Modern Lives](#), which aims to highlight how classic literature continues to influence and invigorate American cultural life today with public lectures, reading groups, actor readings, and workshops in more than 100 communities. The organization seeks to provide a dynamic forum for more fully understanding how the Greek experience intersects and informs contemporary American life and serves as a place where Veterans and their families can feel honored, accepted, and free to share their wisdom. [Learn more about the initiative.](#)

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PROGRAM MODELS TO REPLICATE OR BRING TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Arts programs developed for military servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers exist at the national, state, and local levels, and are increasing as the demand grows. Here we offer three examples of effective program models for easy replication or adaptation in your community.

TIP: Check out the [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military's National Network Directory](#), which lists more than 130 artists and organizations actively engaged in advancing the arts for the health and well-being of our military servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers across the country. Interested in one of those models? The guide is organized by state and each listing provides contact information.

The Veterans History Project

About:

The United States Congress created [the Veterans History Project](#) in 2000 as part of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, one of the world's most respected research and cultural institutions. The project accepts Veterans' personal narratives in the forms of original, unedited audio and video interviews, photographs, letters, journals, military documents, two-dimensional artwork, maps, and unpublished memoirs. Through these mediums, the project preserves the personal accounts



Part 3: Program Models to Replicate or Bring to Your Community

of American wartime Veterans so that future generations better understand the realities of war, thus opening up important dialogue.

Eligibility:

Veterans who served in the United States military in any capacity from World War I to the present and are no longer serving are eligible to participate, regardless of branch or rank. Civilians who served in support of a United States war effort in a professional capacity are also welcome to participate.

TIP: Oral or written history must come from the actual Veteran, not from a spouse, parent, or friend.

Ways to Engage in the Veterans History Project:

1. Share a Veteran's story
2. Interview a Veteran
3. Donate a Veteran's collection

Bringing the Veterans History Project to Your Community

The Library of Congress encourages community events to support the Veterans History Project as an important record of our national history. Representatives of the Veterans History Project are available as speakers or to train your organization to conduct interviews and can mobilize volunteers to interview Veterans and collect their narratives. Any person in 10th grade or above can interview a Veteran. As schools are engaged, students can both spend time volunteering for the Veterans History Project and complete service learning obligations.

Your arts organization can host events during which a Veteran can showcase their videotaped interview. There are many ways this project can benefit from direct and indirect service from all sectors of the community who share a common understanding of the value of Veterans and the insight they can share.

The Library of Congress provides guidelines, sample materials, and background:

- » [*Veterans History Project Field Kit*](#): A step-by-step kit to walk you through the process, including required forms.
- » [*Accepted Media and Formats Standards*](#): Lists guidelines for how to create and deliver your interview.
- » [*Interview Preparation*](#): Details the required steps before an interview can take place.

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» [Guidelines, sample materials, and background resources:](#)

For educators and students who wish to participate.

» [Hosting Community Events:](#) Details a variety of ways to engage the community to participate in the project.

[Check out the Veterans History Project website for more resources.](#)

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival



Participants in the 2015 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Photo credit: Department of Veterans Affairs.

[The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival](#) (NVCAF) is an annual celebration and grand finale stage and art show presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary. Local American Legion Auxiliary branches host talent competitions in visual art, creative writing, dance, drama, music, and more for Veterans receiving treatment in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national healthcare system. Finalists from around the country are invited to take part in the NVCAF.

“I believe art in any form relieves stress, keeps minds active, and has the ability to put a person who might otherwise be solitary around people with a common interest.”

Jessica Herrera, Air Force, New Mexico VA Healthcare System, Albuquerque
GOLD MEDAL: ART DIVISION CATEGORY: SPECIAL RECOGNITION MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Part 3: Program Models to Replicate or Bring to Your Community

You can implement a local or regional Veterans Creative Arts Festival (VCAF) in your community by partnering with the local American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), the closest VA medical facility, and local artists and creative arts therapists to provide mentorship and artistic instruction:

1. **Locate a regional American Legion Auxiliary (ALA).** Consult the [ALA State Office website](#) to find the American Legion Auxiliary closest to you, as all volunteer work associated with Veterans Creative Arts Festivals is coordinated through the ALA.
2. **Locate your regional VA medical facility.** To participate in the VCAF, a Veteran must be an inpatient or outpatient at a VA health facility. Search the [Veterans Integrated Services Network \(VISN\) map](#) to find the one closest to you.
3. **Make connections with the VA facility's Recreational/Creative Arts Therapy departments, or Voluntary Services department.** The departments at each facility vary, but your connection to faculty familiar with creative arts therapy will be through one of those. Approach them as a partner and offer to be the lead organizer to make the local VCAF a reality.

“We have all been told who and what we are. The arts (good, bad, or indifferent) allow us to be our own biographers.”

Paul Brown, US Army, VA Medical Center in Tomah, WI

GOLD MEDAL: CREATIVE WRITING CATEGORY: SOLO INSPIRATIONAL PROSE

Tips:

- » The local festival should take place between **January 1 and March 10 of each year** so that the Veterans may be considered for the NVCAF, held each October.
- » There are more than 120 active arts categories in the festival, including original artwork, artwork from kits, photography, textile arts, sculpture, spoken word poetry, page poetry, short stories, dance, music, solo and group drama, and many more. Make sure to communicate this to participants so they have the most creative freedom in choosing a discipline that fits their interests and needs.
- » Find local judges for the competition. The NVCAF recommends at least five judges for each category. Tap into your network of artists, arts administrators (including gallery owners and theater operators), and arts supporters in the community. Also reach out to local government

[Visit the NVCAF website for more details, including discipline-specific requirements and submission guidelines.](#)

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officials, K-12 teachers, higher education professors of art, drama, dance, poetry/writing and music, and even local TV reporters and news anchors.

» If a local Veteran ends up advancing through the competition to the National Festival, understand that it is the responsibility of the local VA facility to fund the travel to and from the event.

[Hero Miles](#) is also an option for sponsoring air travel for Veterans.

“Participating in the creative arts helps you reach inside to the hidden injuries that can be crippling. The outlet opens us to healing.”

Dolores Day, US Navy, VA Medical Center, Durham, NC

GOLD MEDALS: MUSIC DIVISION CATEGORY: VOCAL SOLO COUNTRY/FOLK/BLEUGRASS

The Living History Veterans Project: Telling Stories Visually



Veteran and student participants in the Living History Veterans Project.

The Living History Veterans Project: Telling Stories Visually (LHVP) was created by Ron Whitehead, artist, Veteran, and art/photography teacher at Ossining High School in Ossining, NY, with fellow art teacher Harry Quiroga. The project pairs high school art students with Veterans who share their stories, photographs, letters, memorabilia, and how the military experience shaped their lives. Studio photographs of the Veterans with their memorabilia are taken and students spend the next two weeks creating personalized and representative artwork that utilizes different forms and media. The entire school and community is involved for the emotional presentations of artwork by the students to the Veterans.

Part 3: Program Models to Replicate or Bring to Your Community

This is an excellent project for Veterans Day and a partnership between generations. With age appropriate accommodations, the Living History Veterans Project can be adapted for grades 4–12 in any community.

[Watch a short documentary on the 2015 Living History Veteran's Project.](#)

Bringing the Living History Veterans Project to Your Community

Connect with a Local School:

- » Meet with administration and faculty from both the art and history/social studies departments to give an overview of the project and ask for their participation.
- » Work with those teachers to decide a plan and timeline based on their curriculum and the school-year schedule. The LHVP requires one full-day meeting with participating Veterans, followed by a presentation ceremony of the art two weeks later.
- » Ask about any clearance needed and guidelines to follow for working in the school as a volunteer.

Connect with Local Veterans:

- » With permission, e-mail the teachers and administrators in your local school district to ask if they have family members or friends who are Veterans and would like to participate.
- » Contact your local American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts.
- » Encourage participating Veterans to invite their friends to take part.

Blueprint for Activity:

1. Groups of two or three students sit down with a Veteran who shares stories, photographs, their military memorabilia (e.g., medals, personal photos, letters from loved ones, patches, etc.), and how their military experience shaped their lives. Each student gleans his or her own perspective from the experience.
2. Students then brainstorm, sketch, and collaborate with the Veteran on how to tell their story through art and/or media. Emphasis is placed on recording specific details from the Veteran's stories to speak to the true, individual experience.
3. Students take portraits of the Veterans and still life photographs of their memorabilia with lighting and poses that capture the mood and essence of the story they want to tell.

Part 3: Program Models to Replicate or Bring to Your Community

4. Over the next two weeks, students create their artistic work using various mediums, depending on what supplies and equipment the school has. Painting and drawing students can use their photographs as reference to work from, while graphic design and photography students edit and manipulate images using Photoshop and Illustrator.
5. Two weeks from the first meeting date, students present the Veterans with their personalized artworks in a ceremony that can be attended by the students' parents, the Veterans' families, the administration, and Board of Education. In an opportunity to teach presentation skills, students should speak to what they gained from the experience, how they created their artwork, and the difficulties and challenges they may have had in the process. Students should also share how the project affected them emotionally.

“Words cannot express the gratitude emanating from the Veterans during this (final) presentation. Because this was such an incredible opportunity to work with local Veterans, the entire school district became involved. Staff members and administration helped to provide the lunch, and came to join in the learning experience. Our entire art department was involved and helped to select the students who would participate. Perhaps the greatest lesson to come from this project was that all of us can use our talents to encourage, help and support others.”

Ron Whitehead, LHVP Co-Founder

Bring an Arts & Military Touring Performance/Exhibition to Your Community

This partial list contains national touring performances, exhibitions, and writing workshops that can be brought to your local community. Touring performers and organizers can bring powerful perspectives and facilitation skills as they work with Veterans and servicemembers all across the country. All of the programs below can be found in the [National Initiative for Arts and Health in the Military National Network Directory](#), with new projects added regularly.

Theater:

Speed Killed My Cousin

From Carpetbag Theatre, *Speed Killed My Cousin* is the story of a young African-American woman Veteran of the Iraq War and her struggle with “Moral Injury,” Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). A third-generation soldier, the central character courts death by vehicular suicide. *Speed* explores multiple issues related to war, including the history and otherness of African-Americans in the military and the experiences of women in combat.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: Linda Parris-Bailey, Executive/Artistic Director, 865-544-0447

Theater of War

Theater of War presents readings of Sophocles’ *Ajax and Philoctetes* to military and civilian communities across the United States and Europe. These ancient plays timelessly depict the psychological and physical wounds inflicted upon warriors. The hope is to de-stigmatize psychological injury, increase awareness of post-deployment psychological health issues; disseminate information regarding available resources; and foster greater family, community, and troop resilience. Theater of War Productions has performed at military sites as diverse as the Pentagon, Guantanamo Bay, Army posts throughout Germany, VA Hospitals, homeless shelters, high school auditoriums, theaters, and churches. Each reading is followed by a town-hall style audience discussion, which has been facilitated with the help of military community members.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: Bryan Doerries, Artistic Director, bdoerries@theater-of-war.com

The Telling Project

The Telling Project is a national performing arts nonprofit that employs theater to deepen our understanding of the military and Veterans’ experience. Greater understanding fosters receptivity, easing Veterans’ transitions back to civil society and allowing communities to benefit from the skills and experience they bring with them. Through this understanding, a community deepens its connection to its Veterans, itself, and its place in the nation and the world.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: info@thetellingproject.org

My Father’s War

This critically acclaimed two-person performance, based on WWII Veteran Herschel Ponder’s memoir, is a powerful storytelling and music experience. It is also a powerful catalyst for healing for Veterans, their families, and anyone who wants to understand what we ask from those who serve. *My Father’s War* has been brought to communities all across the country, presented in performance venues, churches, schools, Veteran service organizations, and at festivals and conferences. Each performance includes powerful post-show discussions and creative workshops.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: Carol Ponder, 615-227-3876, myfatherswar@aol.com

Dance:

Into Sunlight - Robin Becker Dance

Into Sunlight premiered in 2011 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Hofstra University, where it was the inspiration and centerpiece for interdisciplinary conferences examining the effects of war and violence on the individual body and the social body, from Vietnam to our present era. The *Into Sunlight* Veteran/Military program includes performances, post-performance discussions and movement workshops, engaging the military/Veteran and general community with dance that inspires dialogue, gives voice, and offers hope & healing around issues of war and violence.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: Gloria Hage, Executive Director, 212-316-2958, gloria@robinbeckerdance.org

Soldiers Who Salsa

Soldiers Who Salsa features one-hour classes with experienced instructors who introduce basic salsa patterns and build on them, always moving at the pace of the individuals in the class. All steps can be modified to adapt to injury. Open to all military, active duty, reserves, Veterans, and their families. Singles and couples are welcome, and no dance experience is required.

[Find a class near you.](#)

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: Jennifer Ables, Executive Director, jen@soldierswhosalsa.org

Exit12 Dance Company

EXIT12 is a contemporary dance company committed to creating and performing works of high cultural significance that inspire conversations about worldly differences and the lasting effects of violence and conflict on communities, families, and individuals. Through movement, the company educates audiences about the reality of war, advocates for diversity and mutual understanding through cultural exchange, and champions the humanity and dignity of all persons. EXIT12 supports and advances the notion that art heals, and is devoted to serving “those who have been touched by conflict by expressing their stories.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: Roman Baca, Artistic Director, info@exit12danceco.com

Visual Arts:

100 Faces of War

Artist Matt Mitchell started the 100 Faces of War Experience in 2005 and has since painted 100 portraits of Americans who have been to war in Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Each portrait is accompanied by a statement from the person pictured and a brief biography. All of the portraits are available to be exhibited together as a single installation, and have been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, the National Veterans Art Museum, various colleges and universities, and State Houses/Government buildings, libraries, and more.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: [Online form](#)

Combat Paper Project

Combat Paper is based out of Shotwell Paper Mill, a production studio specializing in handmade paper, books, and prints in the heart of the Mission District in San Francisco, CA. Through papermaking workshops, Veterans use their uniforms worn in service to create works of art. The uniforms are cut up, beaten into a pulp, and formed into sheets of paper. Participants use the transformative process of papermaking to reclaim their uniforms as art and express their experiences with the military. The project has traveled extensively in the United States as well as to Canada, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Kosovo providing workshops, exhibitions, performances and artists' talks. Combat Paper branches are located in many states across the country, including California, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Oregon, and Connecticut.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: [Drew Cameron, Founding Member, drewcameron@combatpaper.org](#)

UNCLASSIFIED: The Military Kid Art Show

UNCLASSIFIED: The Military Kid Art Show is the first traveling museum exhibit exploring the life of a military child through art, curated by the BRAT Art Institute (BAI), the only multidisciplinary art institute for military "brats" in the world. Winner of the prestigious Newman's Own Award for programs that improve the quality of life for military families, its mission is to educate and raise awareness of the Military Kid subculture and its life-long impact on individuals and communities, including the intergenerational effects of PTSD. Contemporary and cutting-edge, the exhibit features collections of original, never-before-seen art from 1950 to the present by military brats of all ages, along with photographs, documentary films, STEAM curriculums, and historical artifacts. Educational and arts workshops are also available through BAI, along with arts performances and artists' talks. Since 2013, the exhibit has traveled from colleges to arts centers to museums around the country.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: info@usabrat.org

Film:

Striking a Chord: Instruments of Healing

Striking a Chord: Instruments of Healing, a documentary by Susan Rockefeller, vividly portrays a growing awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its devastating effects, while telling the story of how arts experiences can provide a way to begin the healing process. The film aims to start a conversation and inspire systemic change around the effectiveness of, and the access to, alternative therapies for treating PTSD and addressing associated problems, especially in Veterans. Its goal is to inspire active servicemembers, Veterans, and their families to seek help, remove stigmas around treatment, and focus renewed attention on the effectiveness of the arts and creative art therapies as instruments of healing. The film is distributed online and as a DVD, for free, along with an online Conversation Toolkit to encourage DIY screenings across the country.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: [Online form](#)

Thank You for Your Service

The U.S. military faces a mental health crisis of historic proportions. *Thank You for Your Service* takes aim at our superficial understanding of war trauma and the failed policies that result. Director Tom Donahue interweaves the stories of four struggling Iraq War Veterans with candid interviews of top military and civilian leaders. Observing the systemic neglect, the film argues for significant internal change and offers a roadmap of hope. Bring the film to your local community by signing up as a Movie Captain to host a screening.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: [Online form](#)

Music:

SongwritingWith:Soldiers

SongwritingWith:Soldiers (SWS) uses songwriting as a catalyst for positive change. The program offers retreats and workshops that give participants a unique way to tell their stories, rebuild trust, release pain, and forge new bonds. In retreat and workshop settings, servicemembers are paired with professional songwriters to craft songs about their experiences, often about combat and the return home. Through their songs, participants rediscover their creativity and reconnect with family, friends, and communities. Currently, SWS holds five retreats and four to six workshops per year in the vicinity of U.S. military bases, VA centers, and/or VA hospitals. Check the website to see if there is an upcoming one in your community.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: [Check schedule](#)

CAMMO: Center for American Military Music Opportunities

The Center for American Military Music Opportunities (CAMMO) is an innovative 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to joining American servicemembers, Veterans and family members together to share their love of music, performance, production, writing and entertainment technology, as well as benefiting from the healing power of music and sound. CAMMO also seeks to train and educate servicemembers and Veterans in music industry career opportunities including artist development. CAMMO musicians are available for booking.
CONTACT FOR BOOKING: booking@cammomusic.org

Writing Workshops:

Warrior Writers

Warrior Writers is a Veteran-focused arts organization that fosters artistic exploration and expression through casual, welcoming workshops and retreats. By reflecting and creating in a comfortable space, Warrior Writers encourages and supports healing and community building. Warrior Writers provides workshops, retreats, trainings, performances, and exhibits.
CONTACT FOR BOOKING: info@warriorwriters.org

Military Experience and the Arts

Military Experience and the Arts (MEA) is a volunteer-run organization whose primary mission is to work with Veterans and their families to publish creative prose, poetry, and artwork. Volunteers are based all over the country and include college professors, professional authors, Veterans' advocates, and clinicians. As such, most of the services are provided through e-mail and online writing workshops. In addition to its primary publishing mission, MEA hosts online and in-person writing workshops, and in 2012 and 2015, orchestrated national symposia. MEA's in-person events are free or low-cost opportunities for Veterans and their spouses to build skills in the creative and therapeutic arts.

CONTACT FOR BOOKING: [Online form](#)

4

RESOURCES & APPENDICES

Americans for the Arts Resources

ArtsAcrossTheMilitary.org

An online portal that houses information resources, multimedia presentations, publications, and other assets specific to the work of NIAHM and its partners, including the National Network Directory and national events calendar.

The National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military National Network Directory

The National Initiative for Arts and Health in the Military National Network Directory connects artists and organizations working to support military servicemembers, Veterans, and their families through the arts. View the directory to access more than 130 programs organized by state. Would you like to be included? [*Submit your information to the Directory.*](#)

Arts Deployed: A Practical Guide to Support Arts, Health, and Well-Being across the Military Continuum

A three-part webinar series from Americans for the Arts in partnership with the American Legion Auxiliary that focuses on how to start a dialogue in your community to engage military servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers through the arts to facilitate healing and well-being.

Arts, Health, and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum - Framing a National Plan for Action

This 2013 white paper details a series of recommendations in the areas of research, practice, and policy that came out of two national convenings: The Arts and Health in the Military National Roundtable (November 2012) and the National Summit: Arts, Health, and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum (April 2013).

The Arts: A Promising Solution to Meeting the Challenges of Today's Military—A Summary Report and Blueprint for Action

This 2012 brief reflects the conversations of the 2012 Arts & Health in the Military National Roundtable and was developed to begin the conversation about creating a national plan to foster arts and military efforts. It laid the groundwork that led to the 2013 white paper.

Art in Service: Supporting the Military Community and Changing the Public Narrative

This 2013 paper from Americans for the Arts' [Animating Democracy](#) program highlights examples of how the arts can build awareness of military experiences, contribute to cultural diplomacy, facilitate Veterans' reintegration, and contribute to healing and wellness.

Arts in Health: Improving the Health of Veterans and Older Americans Through the Arts

This issue brief from 2016 [Arts Advocacy Day](#) presents a list of proposed actions for national strategies related to arts and military work.

Other Resources

Creative Forces: The National Endowment for the Arts' Military Healing Arts Network

The NEA and Department of Defense have expanded their military healing arts program into Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. Administered by Americans for the Arts, this expanded program places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at 12 national clinical sites and increases access to therapeutic arts activities in local communities for military members, Veterans, and their families. The program is also investing in research on the impacts and benefits of these innovative treatment methods. [View the program video.](#)

Arts in Healing at the VA – VA Patient Centered Care

Art in healing environments is not a new practice, however, the way the VA is focusing on the influences of art on medical outcomes is. The Veterans Health Administration, VA NY/NJ Veterans Healthcare Network (VISN 3), Americans for the Arts, Johnson & Johnson, and the National Center for Creative Aging joined together to host a national Arts in Healing Symposium. The purpose was to expand and collaborate with community partners to foster Arts in Healing. [View "Discovering Arts in Healing at the VA"](#) to discover one Veteran's story about how art has made a positive impact on his life.

State Arts & Military Initiatives Strategies Sampler (April 2016)

This strategy sampler from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) summarizes existing policy goals, services, and relationships of state arts agencies and regional arts organizations working to support military and Veteran populations through the arts. It also highlights programmatic issues and other challenges these agencies face in realizing their arts and military goals.

Arts & Military Snap Survey Results (April 2016)

NASAA's Arts & Military Snap Survey was a first step toward gaining a more comprehensive understanding of state arts agency and regional arts organization policies, programs, services, partnerships, and other efforts to serve military and Veteran populations.

Appendix A

Starter Questions for Reaching Out to Your Local Military & Veteran Populations

For Agency and Unit Leaders:

1. Are you aware of—or involved in—any creative arts opportunities for servicemembers and Veterans? If so...
 - › Who is the lead contact for that program?
 - › Who are the program's partners?
 - › How is the program promoted?
 - › How is the program funded?

2. What kind of arts programming might be of interest to you?
 - Classes, workshops, drop-in sessions
 - Gathering and sharing activities (e.g., open mics, performances & talk-backs, art walks)
 - Recreational and professional artmaking
 - Artist entrepreneur classes, training, general support
 - Community arts projects (e.g., mural making)
 - Therapeutic arts programs (creative, expressive, or educational goals)
 - Creative Arts Therapy programs (medical/clinical treatment goals)
 - Exhibitions, performances, publications

3. What excites you about the possibility of these opportunities? What are barriers to this work?

4. Do you think your constituents would take advantage of programs in the community if they were offered?

5. Are there spaces in your facility where arts activities could be held?

6. What are the best communication channels to get information about arts opportunities to your constituents? Who are the best contacts and liaisons?

7. Would you serve on an arts and military steering committee, or could you recommend someone for such a committee?

(Appendix A continued)

For Individual Servicemembers, Veterans, and Family Members:

1. What comes to mind when you think of the arts?
2. Do you attend arts events? (e.g., plays, concerts, exhibits, etc?)
3. Do you ever participate in making art yourself? If so, what kind?
 - › Did you have formal instruction or create on your own?
4. Are you aware of any creative arts opportunities currently available in your military community?
5. If creative arts programming was offered to you, would you be interested in participating?
6. What kind of arts programming might be of interest to you?
 - Classes, workshops, drop-in sessions
 - Gathering and sharing activities (e.g., open mics, performances & talk-backs, art walks)
 - Recreational and professional artmaking
 - Artist entrepreneur classes, training, general support
 - Community arts projects (e.g., mural making)
 - Therapeutic arts programs (creative, expressive, or educational goals)
 - Creative Arts Therapy programs (medical/clinical treatment goals)
 - Exhibitions, performances, publications
7. Where would you feel most comfortable participating in a creative arts activity?
8. Would you be interested in sharing your art with the community (e.g., in an exhibit, an open mic night, etc.?)

Appendix B

Starter Questions for Reaching out to Your Local Creative Community & Artists

1. Have you worked with servicemembers and Veterans before? If so, in what capacity?
2. Are you interested in participating in an initiative to build more creative opportunities for servicemembers and Veterans?
3. Do you currently offer any creative arts initiatives specifically for servicemembers and Veterans in the community? If so...
 - › Who is the lead contact for that program?
 - › Who are the program's partners?
 - › How are these programs promoted?
 - › How are they funded?
4. Do you offer current programs that could be adapted for servicemembers, Veterans, and their families?
5. What kind of arts programming might be of interest to you?
 - Classes, workshops, drop-in sessions
 - Gathering and sharing activities (e.g., open mics, performances & talk-backs, art walks)
 - Recreational and professional artmaking
 - Artist entrepreneur classes, training, general support
 - Community arts projects (e.g., mural making)
 - Therapeutic arts programs (creative, expressive, or educational goals)
 - Creative Arts Therapy programs (medical/clinical treatment goals)
 - Exhibitions, performances, and publications
6. What excites you about the possibilities? What are barriers to this work?
7. Have you had any type of training for working with military and Veteran populations? If so, what specifically? If not, would you be willing to participate in a training?
8. Would you serve on an arts and military steering committee, or could you recommend someone for such a committee?

Appendix C

Sample Agenda for Arts & Military Steering Committee Meeting

1hr 10min

[Project Name] Steering Committee Meeting

[Date, Time, Location]

Objectives:

- » To establish commitment to serving [location's] military and Veteran community through the arts
- » To define the role of the steering committee
- » To discuss/define goals for the program/services

Get Acquainted *(10 minutes)*

- » Refreshments and/or snacks
- » Sign-in and/or name tag distribution

Welcome *(15 minutes, initiative leader)*

- » Introduce yourself
- » Thank attendees for their interest and commitment to supporting local military members and Veterans through the arts
- » Describe your impetus for the arts & military programming
- » Describe your vision for the steering committee

Introductions *(10 minutes, initiative leader facilitates)*

- » Ask attendees to introduce themselves, identify their affiliation, and explain what motivated them to be a part of the committee

Steering Committee Role *(10 minutes, initiative leader facilitates)*

- » Discuss the role of the steering committee and expectations for the members

Program/Services Discussion *(15 minutes, initiative lead facilitates)*

- » Describe your initial thoughts for your arts & military program/service and present the research you have done so far
- » Begin to define the goals of your program/service with the Committee

Next Steps *(10 minutes, initiative leader)*

- » Determine next steps and assign responsibilities and deadlines
- » Set next meeting, date, time, and location
- » Ask for volunteers to help plan and lead the next meeting
- » Set a planning time with those that step up to help
- » Remind Committee members that their active involvement is important
- » Thank them again for their attendance and input

Appendix D

Checklist of Promotion Strategies

- Establish a website and social media accounts. Update regularly!
- Design promotional materials: posters, fliers, brochures, and/or postcards
- Disseminate/post promotional materials at...
 - Local creative spaces: galleries, theaters, arts nonprofits, studios, music/art schools
 - Local military sites: bases and units, VA facilities, American Legion, local Veteran associations
 - Community spaces: library, grocery stores, City Hall, churches, food pantry, restaurants, coffee shops, colleges/universities
- Create a video promotion to spread the word in a creative, engaging way
- Invite local newspapers, magazines, and/or bloggers to experience your program/event
- Get in touch with local TV and/or radio stations to run announcements or a story
- Ask announcers to plug your program/event at local sporting events
- Submit your program/event to area event calendars
- Ask steering committee members to spread the word via their networks and social media
 - Provide them with promotional materials as well as written copy/sample social media posts
- Utilize any direct contacts you have within the Veteran/military family community




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