



## **Military and Veterans Healing Arts Grant Program Overview of FY2017-18**

These grants are designed to support arts projects focused on serving North Carolina's military service men and women, veterans, and their families. In addition to receiving funding, the grantees for this pilot year took part in a one-day conference held on Saturday, March 10, 2018 in Jacksonville.

### Context

North Carolina has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest military population in the U.S. with over 130,000 active duty service men and women stationed at five military bases, a military ocean terminal, and a coast guard base. Our veteran population is over 775,000, ranking 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation. Four federal VA medical centers and 14 state veteran service centers are the foundation of support for veterans in the state, but other resources are available through universities and community colleges, and non-profit organizations.

In addition to the intrinsic value that the arts possess to enhance quality of life for citizens, they provide important support for the unique needs of service men and women, veterans and their families. For these military audiences, engaging in arts activities:

- Enhances healing and provides important health benefits in every stage along the way from recovery to wellness.
- Strengthens a sense of self, and creates opportunities to tell one's story through many disciplines, including nonverbal means of expression.
- Builds connection with community and diminishes feelings of isolation, both by making art together in a group setting and also by instigating a public discourse about topics relevant to servicemen and veterans.

### Grant Guidelines

Grants are awarded to local arts councils and art organizations to support projects that serve audiences on the military continuum through arts programming. Grants are awarded to arts organizations that have a track record of working with military or veteran audiences. Projects that grow out of a strong collaboration between arts organizations and military bases, VA hospitals, or veterans service providers receive priority in funding.

Grant amounts range from \$10,000 - \$25,000. Organizations may not apply for more than 10% of their prior-year cash operating expenses. All grants must be matched dollar for dollar except those serving rural, low-wealth counties designated Tier 1, which are eligible for 75 percent to 100 percent funding. Organizations must make a strong case for financial need if the cash match is less than one-to-one.

Funding decisions will be made based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Artistic quality of the project

- Appropriate payment to artists
- Evidence of solid planning with a military/veteran partner organization
- Potential of project to have a positive impact on identified military/veteran audience.
- Degree of readiness to quickly implement the project plans
- Inclusiveness of racially, culturally, and economically diverse participants as appropriate to the project
- Strength of management and resources necessary to implement project

#### First Round of Funded Projects

A panel, comprised of arts professionals and military representatives, met on October 31<sup>st</sup> to discuss and evaluate the applications. It was the consensus of the panel to recommend that the Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources fund the four proposals receiving the highest scores. The Secretary approved these four grants, which are listed below, on November 3, 2017.

#### **Asheville Area Arts Council, Asheville**

\$26,000

A partnership between the AAAC and the Charles George VA Medical Center was established over a year ago to expand on the arts and humanities work taking place at the hospital and to offer more creative opportunities to veterans in the community. This project adds community-based workshops in pottery and in fiber arts taught by local professional artists. The grant also supports the administrative costs associated with this staff-intensive work.

#### **Cape Fear Regional Theatre, Fayetteville**

\$23,385

CFRT has a long history of collaborative programming with Fort Bragg. This proposal describes the “kick off” for a three-year plan to deepen the connections with the base by establishing Studio Workshops at various locations on post. The Studio Workshops are theater classes taught by CFRT staff and lead artists, and they are designed to serve active duty personnel and families. Additionally, CRFT seeks funding to build its staff capacity and hire a highly qualified full-time Military Liaison.

#### **Dare County Arts Council, Manteo**

\$10,315

Since 2013 the DCAC has presented the OBX Veterans Week, which includes the veterans writing workshop weekend that is the anchor for those activities. This application seeks support for OBX Veterans Week 2017 and adds additional art workshops in various disciplines such as photography, painting and songwriting taught by professional artists. The additional workshops will happen later in the year. The network of partners that work with DCAC on veterans programming is very impressive.

#### **United Service Organizations of NC, Raleigh**

\$15,300

For many years the USO of NC has provided military culture training workshops for small businesses that wish to hire veterans. Recently they adapted that model to provide a workshop for the Asheville Area Arts Council to train the artists who will be providing programs for veterans. It was a great success, and now USO seeks to offer the training to more local arts councils around the state. Additionally, the USO is expanding the role that artists will play in the series of Reset Programs offered to military personnel and their families.