



Veterans Council of Duval County

"Strength in Unity"

Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund Grants

GRANT GUIDELINES

The Veterans Council of Duval County is privileged that through the Naming Rights Agreement between VyStar Credit Union and the City of Jacksonville, it is able to give back to Veteran's Service Organizations located in Duval County, Florida that serve Veterans' needs who reside in Duval County, Florida. These funds are to aid our local veterans in an effort to improve their lives and morale. Grants will be awarded in a range of \$500.00 to \$10,000.00.

These grants are expected to broadcast a positive image of the collaboration between the City of Jacksonville, Vystar Credit Union, the Veterans Council of Duval County, and all members and member organizations of the Veterans Council of Duval County in support of the veterans and their families in Duval County.

A. **ELIGIBILITY:** To be considered for funding, applying organizations must:

1. Have a current non-profit, tax-exempt classification under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.
2. Have completed and filed a Form 990 or a Form 990IN
3. Be current on any other Internal Revenue Service reporting requirements.
4. Be in good status with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.
5. Have a physical location or address within, or have operations based in Duval County, Florida.
6. Have broad community support and address specific veteran's needs equally without discrimination against any specific race, gender, sexual orientation, or religious background as protected by law.
7. Expend funds and provide services only in Duval County, Florida.
8. Address service to veterans in their mission statement.
9. Ensure that any grant funds awarded must be expended within 12 months from the date the funds are disbursed.

10. Acknowledge that eligible organizations with a member sitting on the VMATF Committee may apply for a grant but that committee member shall not be present during deliberations of their organization's application and shall not have a vote for approval for their organization's grant request. The Committee member may be present during the public hearing (VCDC members in good standing only).
11. Acknowledge that grants must be used to serve any veterans and veteran's families in Duval County, FL, and not only members of the requesting organizations.

B. **EXCLUSIONS:** Funds will not be granted for or to the following:

1. Individuals (Scholarships and/or veteran programs benefiting students of veterans will be considered but an individual cannot apply for grants themselves.)
2. Private Foundations
3. Organizations that are themselves, grant-making bodies
4. Organizational Salaries, Commissions, Rent, or Utilities (program or project-specific operational expenses may be allowed upon review or application)
5. Organizational travel or conference expenses
6. Sponsorships, events, or projects for which the organization's staff may receive tangible benefits or privileges
7. Political Action Committees, political causes, or candidate's political support
8. Debt reduction for the organization applying for the grant
9. Gifts, honorarium, or gratuities
10. Advertisements (unless specifically utilized for a project and the requested advertisement funds are limited to 5% of the grant received)

C. **PARAMETERS:** This is what the Council and its Grant Committee are looking for (it is suggested to specifically write either of these into your grant application):

1. The project or program's specific needs that serve Veterans first.
2. Number of veteran(s) lives impacted, services provided, needs met, increased reach, etc.

D. **PROCEDURES:** When submitting a grant application, please ensure all requested information, with supporting documentation, is uploaded to the City of Jacksonville's online application portal.

1. Required Documentation:

- a) Completed grant application
- b) Current W-9 from your organization
- c) Proof of the organization's 501(c) status
- d) Most recent audited financial statements
- e) Most recent IRS returns
- f) Most recent Form-990 or Form-990IN
- g) Certificate of Status from Florida Division of Corporations
- h) Operating budget for the current fiscal year
- i) Supporting documents regarding how funds will be used
- j) Solicitation of Contributions Registration Application
(can be found using this link:
<http://forms.freshfromflorida.com/10100.pdf>.)
- k) Copy of previous "close out" report if your organization has received prior grants from the Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund (Appendix A) - Recipients will be allowed time from the initial October distribution to the following October to show use of previously awarded funds. Hypothetically, an organization could be requesting a grant while still using their funds received from the previous year's grant.
- l) Grant recipients must execute a "Veterans Council of Duval County" Agreement

2. Recognition of the Veterans Council of Duval County

- a) If awarded a grant, recipients shall identify the Veterans Council of Duval County as a contributor. All such acknowledgments and promotions shall be subject to the prior approval of the Veterans Council of Duval County. This may be accomplished through newsletters, social media, websites, events, annual reports, signage interviews, etc. The award of grant funds may not imply or infer an approval or recommendation by the Veterans Council of Duval County. The Veterans Council of Duval County will provide a copy of the logo for recipients to use.

3. Grant Application Timeline:

- a) The Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund grant application will be available via the Veterans Council of Duval County and the City of Jacksonville's Military and Veterans Affairs Department (MAVD) websites commencing **January 1st** of each year. The Deadline for submission of applications and all required supporting documentation is **11:59 pm on January 15th** of each year. **NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE ALLOWED.** Any Organization receiving a grant award will be announced no later than April 1st of each year. The funding of awarded grants will be distributed by the City of Jacksonville after October 1st of the year the grant is submitted, once the City of Jacksonville Budget has been approved. All funds must be used before the next grant cycle.
- b) The Chairman of the Veterans Council of Duval County shall appoint a neutral third party, not affiliated with the VCDC or member organization requesting a grant, to work with the Grant Committee to review all applications for completeness. Once all completed applications are received and reviewed, the third party will provide the names of those organizations making applications to the Executive Board. The VCDC Chairman shall then provide to the public a listing of the entities making complete applications no later than January 22nd of the current fiscal year. The completed applications will then be submitted to the Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund Committee (VMATFC) for consideration.
- c) Any incomplete applications submitted will automatically be rejected and the organization will be provided notice of rejection by the Executive Board via email from the VCDC Chairman. Every application that is complete will receive a confirmation via email from the VCDC Chairman.
- d) The VCDC VMATF Committee shall hold two (2) meetings in December of the current fiscal year to conduct training on the grant application process. The VMATF Grant Committee Chairman will notify the Council of the dates of these classes and they will be placed in the VCDC Calendar on the VCDC Website. All applicants must attend one (1) of these meetings to be considered eligible to apply for grants during the current grant cycle. If unable to attend the two (2) scheduled application training classes, applicants must contact the VMATF Committee Chairman and provide valid reasons for their inability to attend, and if applicable, be provided a recording of the training class.

- e) The VMATFC shall, no later than the December VCDC monthly meeting, post and announce their meeting(s) that will be held to discuss the grant applications, with the first meeting occurring no earlier than January 15th and no later than seven days after the VCDC January monthly meeting. There shall be a minimum of two VMATFC meetings prior to the VCDC monthly meeting in March.

- f) Any veteran or organization desiring to submit their concerns or recommendations for any organization that filed a grant application that has been announced by the Executive Board may submit, in writing, their concerns or recommendations to the Committee Chairman no later than 14 days after the Executive Board has made its public announcement of the grant applicants.

- g) An hour before the VCDC monthly meeting in March, there will be an opportunity for each applicant to address the VMATFC at a public hearing. Each applicant will be given three (3) minutes to address the VMATFC regarding their current year's grant application(s). Once each applicant has had the chance to address the VMATFC, any applicant will be given another three (3) minute opportunity to address the VMATFC regarding their current year's application. All applicants addressing the VMATFC will be finished within the hour provided before the normally scheduled March VCDC monthly meeting.

- h) Two or more veteran organization members in good standing may collaborate on a project and apply for a grant to be utilized on the collaborative project. This project will be known as a "Veterans Council of Duval County" sponsored project. The amount of any collaborative project shall be limited to between \$500.00 to \$10,000.00 per organization that is part of the collaborative project. Grant award winner(s) will report 50% of grant expenditure and 100% of grant completion in the given year of distribution of grant funds (October to October).

- i) The VCDC does not have to apply for a grant to obtain funds from the VMATF for use in its educational and outreach projects, advertisements, programs, special events, or consultation requests to third-party professionals for advice, development of business plans, renderings, or plans. These funds will be held and accounted for separately from the VCDC's operating account and shall be spent only on items approved by the VCDC's members in good standing. The amount obtained from the VMATF shall not exceed \$2,500.00 annually unless approved otherwise by the VCDC members in good standing.

GRANT PROTOCOL

A. Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund Committee:

1. A nine-member Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund Committee (VMATFC) shall be elected and in place no later than October of each year. The initial VMATFC members were elected for staggered terms by eligible VCDC voting organizations. During the initial election process, the two members who received the highest total number of votes are to serve for three years and the next two highest number of votes will serve for two years, and the next three members will serve for one year. After the initial October 2019 election cycle, members will be elected for three-year terms thereafter. The committee will vote for two chairpeople to run the process of the VMATFC by a majority vote of the VMATFC. There will be nine total VMATFC volunteers each year: seven voting members, one alternate, and one standby. All members will participate in all meetings. The alternate and standby members will be used to avoid any perceived conflict of interest when voting for grant approval. In the event a member of the committee is unable to perform their duties, they will be asked to step down and a new committee member shall be nominated and elected by a majority vote of the Veterans Council of Duval County.
2. All members of the VMATFC shall be veterans and active members of the Veterans Council of Duval County. The seven members elected by the eligible voting membership shall be entrusted with the authority to make grant recommendations to the Executive Board.

B. Nominations to the Board:

1. Each eligible VCDC voting organization or an individual member may nominate only one veteran each election cycle. A member delegate or individual member delegate may nominate themselves.
2. Each voting member organization can vote for as many seats as are open. Voting can be conducted by using any means deemed acceptable by the members and member organizations of the Council in good standing.

C. Timeline (To be written into the applicable VCDC monthly meeting's agenda):

1. September: Nominations of candidates
2. October: Voting for candidates
3. November: Newly elected Committee members assume positions
4. December: All VMATFC Public Meetings and locations or Virtual meeting IDs, Passcodes, and URLs announced and published.

D. Removal from the Board:

1. If a VMATFC member is not performing their duties and responsibilities as established by the council, a minimum of five members of the VMATFC must agree and present written justification to the Executive Board to consider the member's removal. If the VMATFC member is removed from the VMATFC, the Council shall request nominations and hold elections for a replacement for a term that will expire at the next scheduled election.

E. Voting:

1. All VMATFC meetings are open to the public and meeting locations or electronic means of observing shall be announced. Only the VMATC members may discuss the applicants during the meeting and all others must remain silent and respectful to the VMATFC. The VMATFC deliberations are private and closed to the public to ensure no undue influence on the committee and its voting.
2. Prior to voting, The VMATFC shall conduct a public hearing of the VCDC member organizations in good standing to hear the input of any VCDC member organization in good standing on current applicants being considered for a Grant. This hearing shall be conducted at 6:00 p.m. on the day of the regularly scheduled VCDC monthly meeting that immediately follows.
3. The VCDC Chairman or their alternate may attend all VMATFC meetings but does not have a vote (limited to one Executive Board member per meeting). The VMATFC Chairperson will run all VMATFC meetings. All nine VMATFC members must review and vote on each grant's merit.
4. The VCDC membership at large will not be given a vote as to who will or will not receive grants nor the amount of funds provided.

F. Priority of Awards:

1. Priority will be based on the VMATFC committee voting and discussions. Priority will be given to those organizations who are active members of the VCDC, serving individual veterans' needs directly, then programs supporting veterans' needs, then programs supporting veterans' families, and then all other veteran service organizations serving Veterans in Duval County, FL. Grant selections will be placed in priority order by the VMATFC and then submitted to the Executive Board.

G. General:

1. Annually, at the January VCDC meeting, the voting members shall vote to determine the maximum dollar amount of grant funds to be awarded to Grant applicants or an amount to place in reserves and considered restricted funds that shall not be utilized for those years' grant recommendations. The sum of \$20,000.00 annually, commencing with the 2019 Grant Funds, shall be held back by the City of Jacksonville and considered restricted funds for use on future VCDC projects unless otherwise voted on annually by the members of the VCDC in good standing. There is no requirement for the VMATFC to expend all of these funds in any given year. The number of grants and funding each year will be determined based on the number of selected grants and their dollar amount as determined by the VMATFC and available funds in the Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund and any limitations voted on by the VCDC.
2. The VMATFC will present its recommendations to the Executive Board for approval no later than midnight on February 15th of each year. The VMATFC will provide which organization(s) they recommend receiving grants and the amount to be awarded. Said list shall be provided in an order of priority based on the needs presented in the grant application. If there are any issues or concerns, the Executive Board and the VMATFC will discuss and come to an agreement before submission to the City of Jacksonville. However, if the VMATFC and the Executive Board are unable to agree, then the issue will be brought to the members of the VCDC to be voted on by its members in good standing. There is no appeal process.

3. Once the Grant Recommendations are received from the VMATFC, the Executive Board shall convene a special meeting to review the recommendations of the VMATFC along with the applications if so requested. Once the Executive Board votes on the VMATFC recommendations with or without any changes, the Executive Board shall provide the approved recommendations to the City of Jacksonville for final review and approval no later than 11:59 pm on March 15th of each year. Once approved by the City of Jacksonville, the Executive Board shall provide the final list of approved grant recipients to the City of Jacksonville to be included in their annual budget no later than midnight on March 31st of each year. Distribution of funds will follow the City of Jacksonville's normal budget approval process and will usually be distributed in October of the year the grant application(s) were submitted. Organizations will have one year to prove that the funds from the grant awarded were used accordingly.



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Appendix A - Close Out Report

If your organization has received a grant from a prior year, you must submit the best summary of the use of those funds with your new grant application. This must be submitted with the Grant application which opens on January 1st. The following format should be used:

- A. Grant Amount Awarded:
- B. Date Funds Distributed:
- C. Funds Spent to Date:
- D. Plan to use funds (with a timeline):
- E. Explanation and summary of how your organization has used the prior year's grant funds while requesting more grant money for the current year:

Grant recipients will submit a written explanation when all funds have been spent, proving the use, as directed, of the grant funds.