

Montana Warriors
Forward (MWF)
Stakeholder
Coalition Meeting
April 14, 2026



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC HEALTH &
HUMAN SERVICES**

Agenda

- Introductions (In the chat)
- Program Overview
- MWF Partner Updates
 - VA (Federal and State) – Veteran Suicide Focus Group, July 13, 2026
 - MTNG
 - VNN
 - Safer Communities Montana
- Stakeholder Highlight – Farmer Veteran Coalition, Lawrence Rhone; Great Plains Veteran Services Center, Kasi Vansandt
- Event Announcement – Bitterroot Valley Veterans Resource Fair, Tori Miralda
- Resource Showcase – Crisis Dashboard and Veteran Resource Map, Lisa Curry and Briana Bogad, JGResearch
- Q&A

Montana Warriors Forward Mission

- **Task** – Implement a suicide prevention program for Montana’s Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families (SMVF) that addresses the root causes of suicide through identification and screening for risk, building protective factors and facilitating care transitions for those determined to be at risk and by providing safe storage and/or disposal of lethal means for individuals in crisis.
- **Purpose** – To reduce the number of suicides among the SMVF community in Montana and to build a network of protective factors to reduce suicide risk.
- **Endstate** – The suicide rate for SMVF in Montana lowered to below the state rate and a statewide network of providers and protectors established to keep it that way.

Goals of the MWF Stakeholder's Coalition



BUILD A COALITION OF INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING SMVF IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



SOLICIT IDEAS FOR EXPANDING THE PROGRAM'S REACH AND IMPACT.



ASSIST PEER COACHES WITH BUILDING SMVF SUPPORT UNITS IN UNDERSERVED COUNTIES AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

MWF Priority Areas

Priority Area 1 –
Identification and
Screening

Priority Area 2 –
Promote
Connectedness and
Improve Care
Transitions

Priority Area 3 –
Lethal Means Safety
and Safety Planning

Current
Montana
Warriors
Forward
Partners

Montana DPHHS

Montana Veteran's Affairs Division (MVAD)

Montana National Guard

Fort Harrison VA (VISN 19)

Lewis and Clark Public Health (Helena)

Riverstone Health (Billings)

Veteran's Navigation Network (VNN)

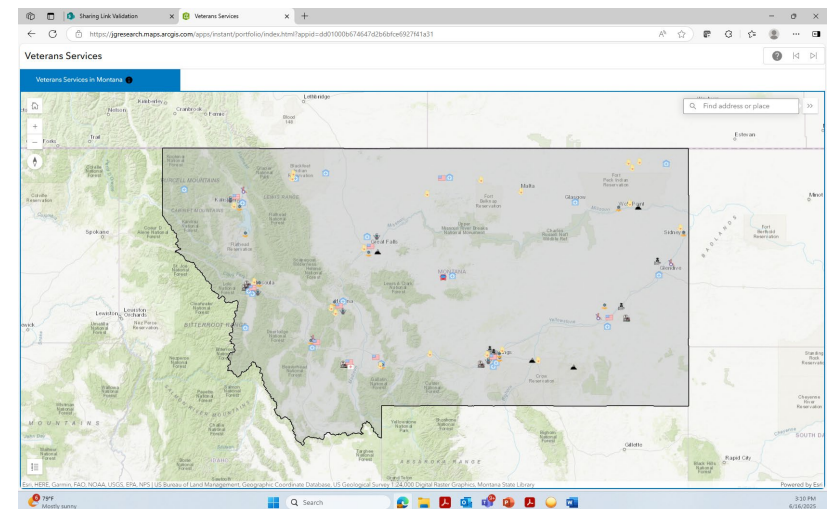
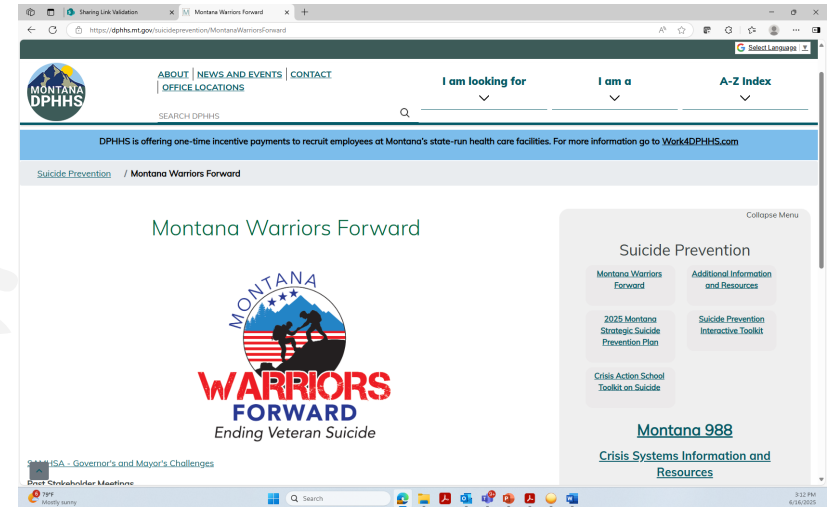
American Legion

HB 118 Grant

- Grants awarded (\$500K) to organizations conducting suicide prevention activities in line with evidence-based best practices.
- Past grantees have conducted work in all three of the MWF priority areas.
- Dynamic Recovery in Great Falls was awarded a grant this year, focused on veteran suicide prevention, providing training for healthcare providers, peers and on lethal means safe storage.

MWF Webpage and Resource Map

- Links to partners and stakeholders
- Resources and toolkits for VSOs and peers.
- Interactive map of SMVF resources at: <https://jgresearch.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/portfolio/index.html?appid=dd01000b674647d2b6bfce6927f41a31>





VETERAN'S CHALLENGE

For the last 40 years, Montana has ranked among the top five states in the U.S. for suicides per capita. Suicide has a devastating effect on the people and their communities in Montana. For Montana Veterans, this issue is a major concern.

The MT 988 Veteran's Challenge is a collaborative endeavor between Montana Veterans and MSU School of Art students. The project seeks to increase knowledge and awareness around the issues of suicide and suicide prevention.

The MT 988 Veteran's Challenge is part of a series of projects done by students and artists across Montana that deal with the issue of suicide and suicide prevention. The projects focus on learning, community engagement, and outreach.

SPONSORS INCLUDE:

**MSU VETERAN SERVICES | MSU DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS
MSU SCHOOL OF ART | MSU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE
ARTHUR M BLANK FAMILY FOUNDATION | MONTANA DPHHS**

If you or someone you know is in crisis - speak with a friend, parent, teacher, school counselor, call **988** or text "MT" to **741 741** where there are trained, caring, individuals available to help.

MT 988 PROJECT VETERAN'S CHALLENGE



These challenge coins were designed by students, with help from their Montana State Veteran partners, as part of MSU's Graphic Design 367 Identity Systems class.

**SPONSORS INCLUDE:
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MSU SCHOOL OF ART | MSU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE
ARTHUR M BLANK FAMILY FOUNDATION | MONTANA DPHHS**



MT 988 Challenge Coin designed by MSU student Jessica Rietan.



Rick Gale, Veterans Alliance of Southwest Montana. displays the MT 988 Challenge Coins at Bozeman High.

OUT-REACH

mt 988 veteran's challenge coin project

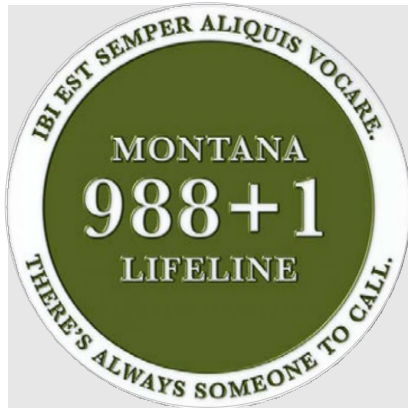
Some of the Veteran's Challenge coins designs.
Each work is a personal expression created by a student designer and their Veteran partners.



Gracie Dusbabek



Josephine Brown



Izzie Milton



Halee Head



Way Forward

- Montana Safe Storage Initiative outreach
- Bitterroot Valley Veterans Resource Fair
- SB95 reengagement during 2027 legislative session
- RFP for 2027 HB118 initiatives (Listed on the State eMACS system. Will be posted in Spring 2027.)

What you can do



Attend coalition meetings and provide feedback from the field.



Invite other stakeholders in your area to participate. (Please send me their contact information.)



Connect with 211 to update SMVF serving resources in your area.



Encourage peers in under-served areas to establish SMVF support units.



Be on the lookout for the HB118 Grant RFP, if your organization is/or would like to be working on one of the three priority areas.

SAVE THE DATE!

BITTERROOT VALLEY VETERAN'S RESOURCE FAIR

SATURDAY MAY 30TH 2026

9 - 3 PM

OPENING CEREMONY AT 10AM

-PRESENTATION OF COLORS AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

RAVALLI COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS
EVENT CENTER

NO FEES

FOOD TRUCKS & DOOR PRIZES!

REMARKS BY:

TODD DUNLAP, EWCM, USN (RET)
(DIRECTOR, MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS)

BG GIBSON, MONTANA ADJUTANT GENERAL
(TENTATIVE)

CSM DEBOO, COMMAND SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER
(MONTANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD)

JOHN TABB, SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER, MT 988
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

BREAK OUT SESSIONS:

VSO MEETINGS, HOME CARE PROGRAMS,
AND MEDICAL CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

SERVICE & CARE PROVIDERS FROM AROUND THE VALLEY
EMPLOYERS TABLES - OPEN TO COMMUNITY - HAM RADIO DEMONSTRATIONS

FOR MORE INFO:

CONTACT

VICTORIA MIRALDA

(406) 677 -0524

VMIRALDA@RC.MT.GOV



SUPPORTERS

VA OUTREACH OFFICE, HELENA
RAVALLI COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE CENTER
RAVALLI COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COALITION
MISSOULA VETS CENTER
CORVALLIS AMERICAN LEGION POST 91
MONTANA VA - HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



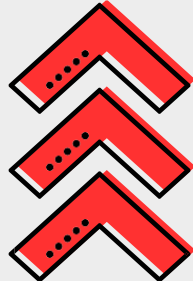
VETERANS
VICTORY ALLIANCE





FARMER VETERAN

COALITION



Message from the CEO

Our nation's veterans know what it means to serve with courage, resilience, and purpose. At the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC), we believe those same values belong in the fields, barns, and markets that feed America.

- Expand the Fellowship Fund to open more doors
- Raise the visibility of the Homegrown By Heroes label
- Build career pathways for every veteran who dreams of farming
- Strengthen behavioral health support
- Lead in food security
- Stand ready to assist when disaster strikes
- Unite partners, chapters, and communities, to create opportunity, hope, and lasting impact





Vision Statement

The Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) will be the national leaders in developing a network of empowered Veterans and active-duty service members who are dedicated to farming and ranching success with a commitment to strengthening national food security.



Mission Statement

The mission of the Farmer Veteran Coalition is to serve, empower, and connect military veterans and active-duty service members with the resources, education, training, and partnerships necessary to cultivate successful careers in agriculture.

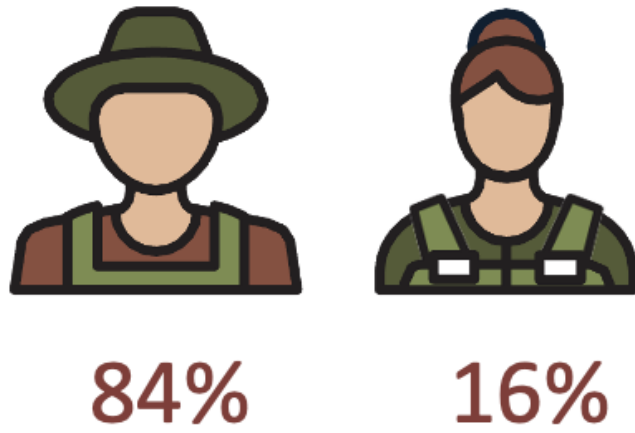


Core Values

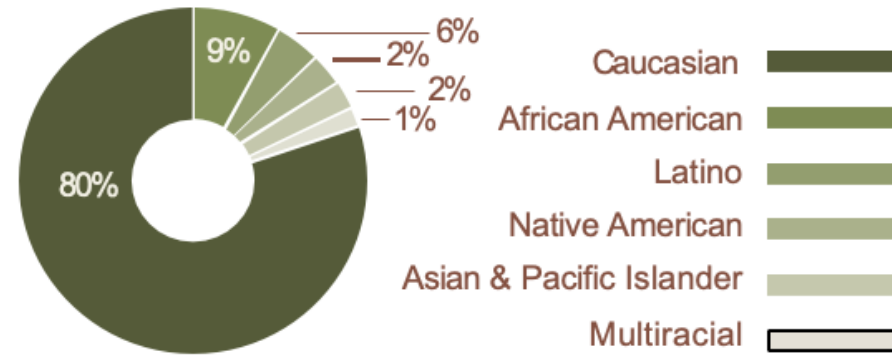
Honor
Community
Resiliency
Stewardship

Who are FVC's members?

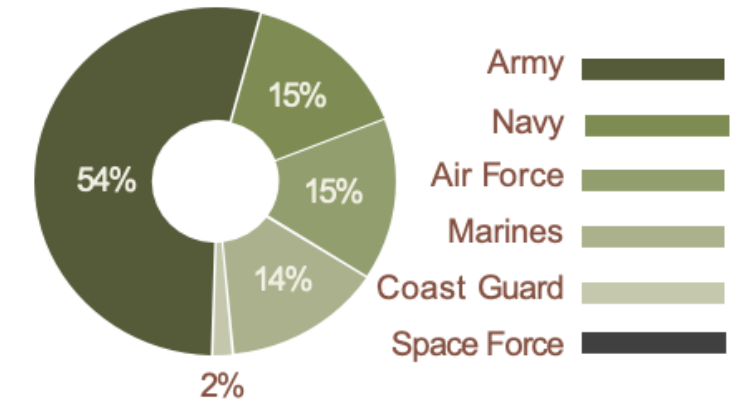
GENDER



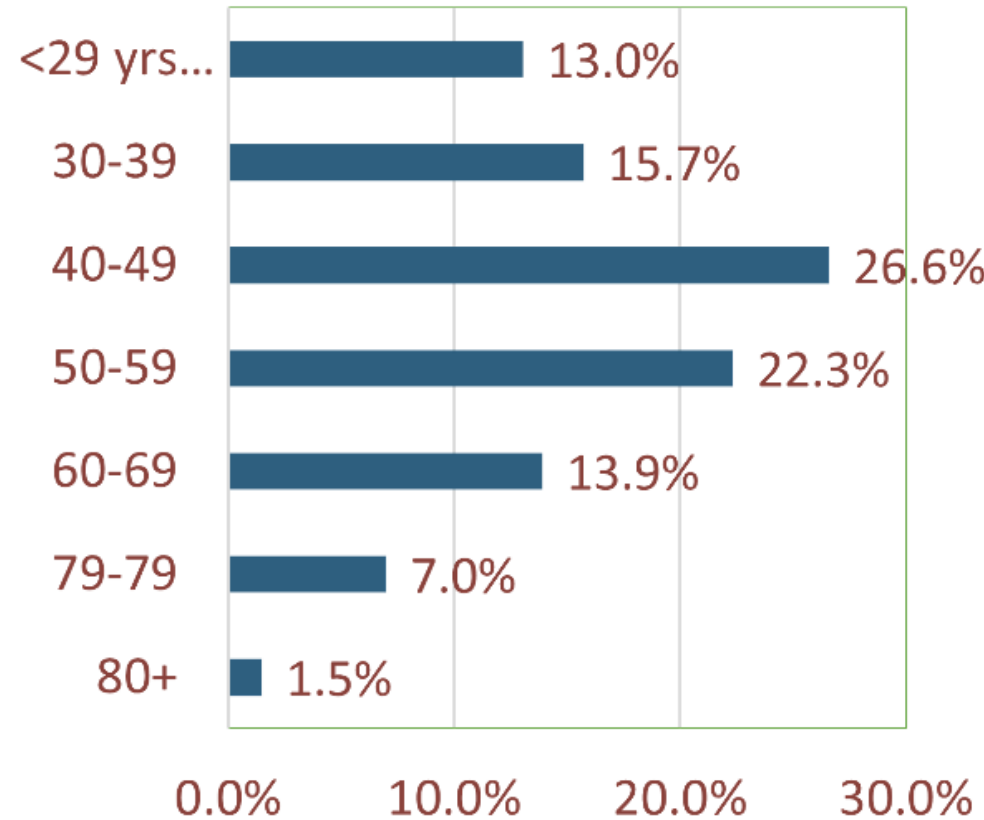
RACE & ETHNICITY



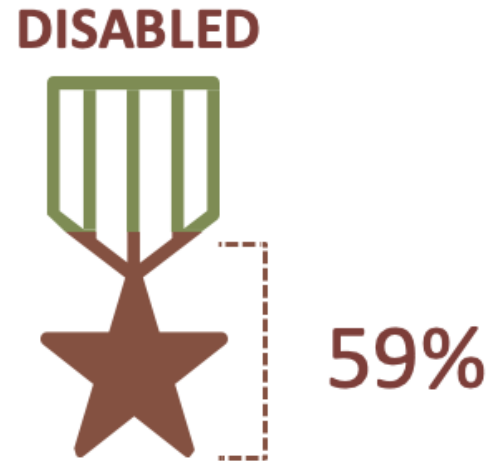
BRANCH OF SERVICE



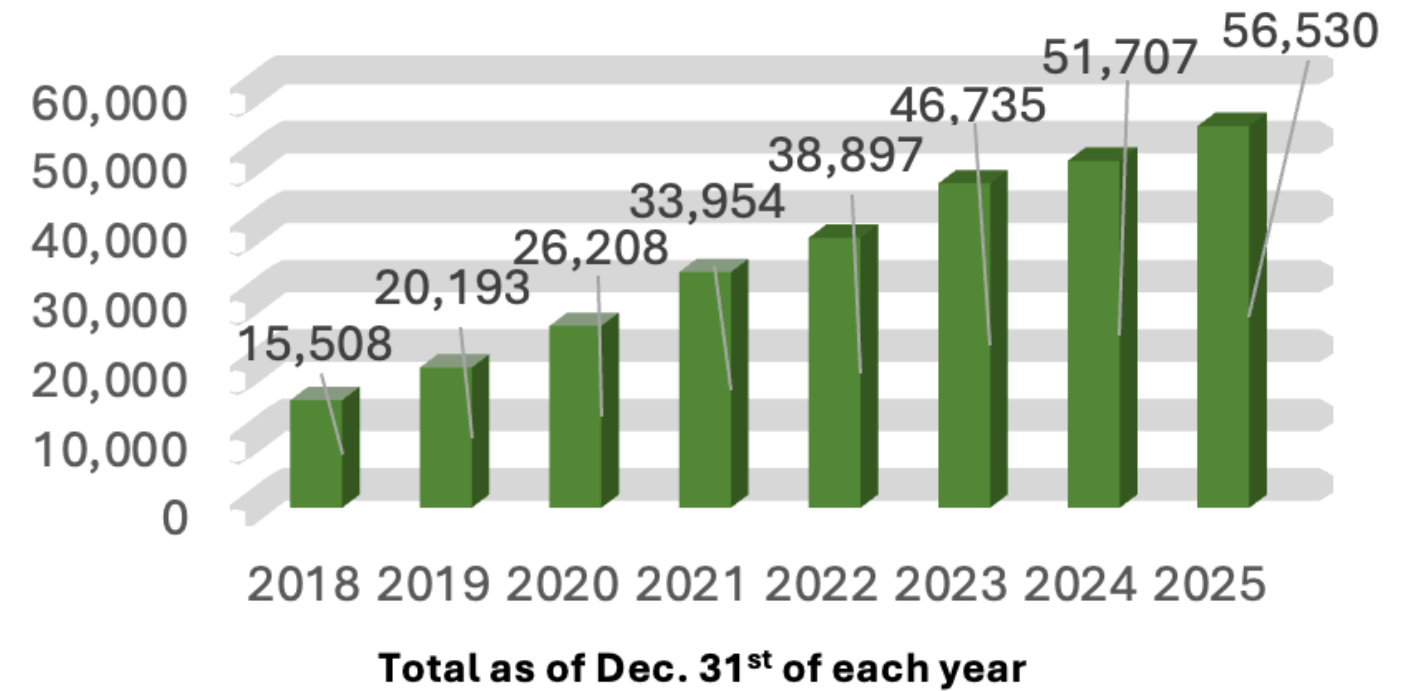
AGE RANGES



SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED



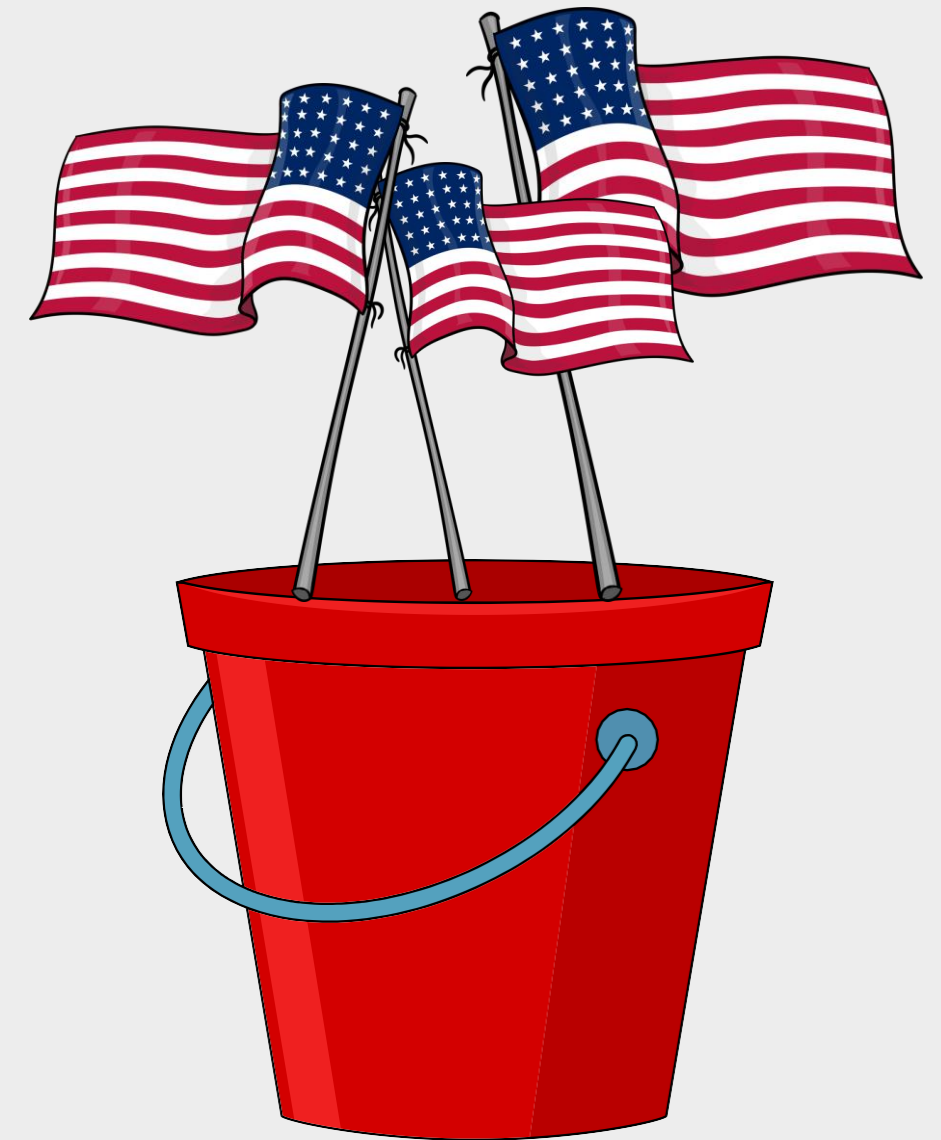
MEMBER GROWTH





Program Focus

1. Membership Services
2. Fellowship Fund
3. Development
4. Chapter Support/Regional Directors
5. Homegrown By Heroes/MarketMaker
6. Behavioral Health
7. Careers
8. Disaster Preparation, Relief, and Recovery
9. Fields4Valor/Food Insecurity
10. Government Affairs



Membership Services

FVC membership is open to both veterans and non-veterans (as associate members).

- Technical assistance through FVC Call Center via 855-FVC-FARM and email support via support@farmvetco.org.
- Affinity Program amplifies the content of discount partners for ag equipment, supplies, and services for FVC veteran members.
- Notification of education and grant opportunities through monthly newsletter, social media, podcast, and webinars.

FVC creates high quality national programs and projects to serve the needs of our national membership.

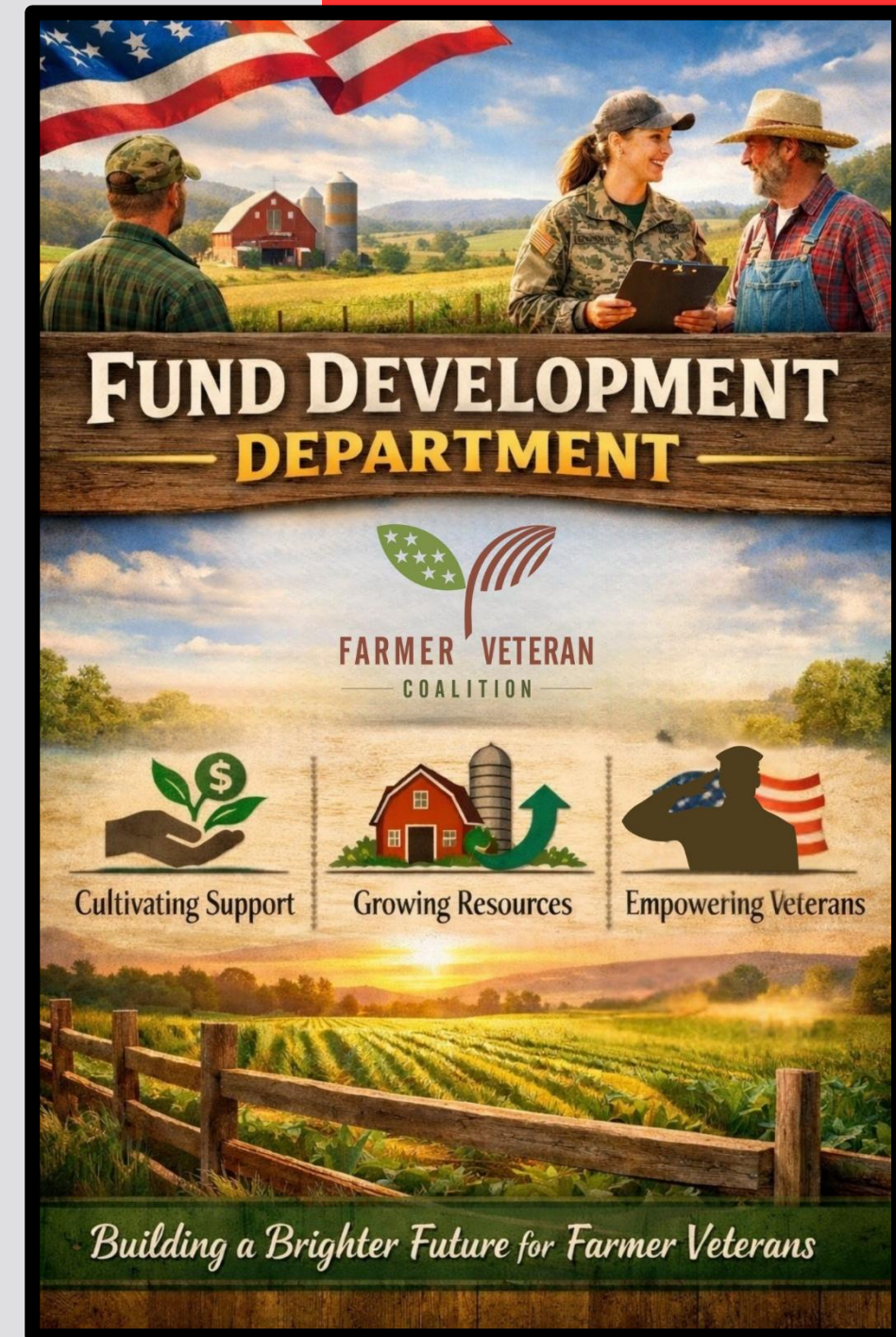


Fund Development

Diversify revenue streams to empower more veterans. Build long-term relationships with donor partners who share the mission of FVC.

Goals:

- Leverage advancement, councils relationships
- Fund 1-in-3 applicants for the Fellowship Fund
- Support chapters with their fundraising goals
- Assist members with their individual grant applications



State Chapters

FVC aims to build a robust, unified, and mission-driven network of FVC State Chapters that support members with regional relevance, resource access, and leadership development.

There are a total of 25 state chapters, with more on the way. As we add more, we plan to:

- Strengthen chapter capacity and leadership.
- Promote national program alignment and integration with state chapters.
- Streamline communication and collaboration.



Fellowship Fund

The Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund is a small grant program that provides direct assistance to veterans who are in their beginning years of farming or ranching.

- Provides funds for items the veteran has identified will make a crucial difference in the launch of their farming business.
- Awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Established in 2011 and has awarded over \$5 million in small grants and equipment to more than 1,300 Farmer Veterans. In 2025, 136 Farmer Veterans across 38 states were awarded.

Major sponsors include Farm Credit, Kubota Tractor Corporation, Tractor Supply Co., Wounded Warrior Project, and more.



Geared to Give

In partnership with Kubota Tractor Corporation, the Geared to Give program provides equipment and grants through the Fellowship Fund.

Each year, Kubota awards five pieces of equipment through the Geared to Give program.

Since 2015, Geared to Give has awarded 51 pieces of equipment to FVC veteran members.

51  **PIECES OF
EQUIPMENT
AWARDED**



In honor of Veterans Day, Kubota and FVC honored the 2025 awardees as part of Kubota's annual dealer meeting, Kubota Connect, held in Grapevine, TX.

Goals for Fellowship Fund

- Expand Fellowship Fund impact by opening it up to Blue Star and Gold Star families.
- Grow and diversify donor base.
- Increase purchasing power by coordinating vendor discounts for awardees when available.
- Collaborate nationally with USDA, state agencies, agribusinesses, and veteran service organizations (VSOs) to support beginning farmers and ranchers.



Homegrown By Heroes

The Homegrown By Heroes (HBH) label is the official farmer veteran branding program and is administered by the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

It certifies ranchers, farmers, and producers to sell their products as veteran-owned and produced. This allows veterans to differentiate their farm and ranch products in a crowded marketplace.

22 partnerships with state Departments of Agriculture.



Goals for Homegrown By Heroes

It is the goal of FVC to make the Homegrown By Heroes label the most recognized and trusted certification for veteran-grown agricultural products across the United States.

- Expand certification reach and recognition.
- Strengthen brand integrity and consumer trust.
- Support HBH-certified producers with market access.



MarketMaker

Looking to buy from a veteran-owned farm near you? The Homegrown By Heroes Locator Map, powered by MarketMaker, helps you quickly find HBH-certified farmers, ranchers, and producers in your area.

Creating a free profile on MarketMaker and linking it to your HBH and/or FVC affiliation ensures you're visible on the national locator map.



Behavioral Health

FVC is a Center of Distinction for Advocates for Human Potential's Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Program.

WRAP is an evidence-based program wherein participants create a personalized plan that supports their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The plan is developed by the individual and for the individual, based on what they identify as helpful, meaningful, and effective.

FVC provides suicide prevention training and resources such as QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) training, as well as "Safe Talk" training through Living Works.



Careers Center

FVC encourages every farmer veteran to achieve meaningful, sustainable employment in agriculture and associated industries through tailored support, partnerships, and advocacy.

FVC partners with the USDA, extension offices, and private sector employers to identify high-demand career job placement needs.

Facilitate apprenticeships and internships with veteran-preferred employers. This includes mentorship and entrepreneurial training for those starting a farming business.



FVC and AgCareers, the leading online job board and human resource provider for the ag industry, have partnered to provide the farmer veteran community with access to ag-related jobs around the country.

Careers Center (HIVE Institutional Coming Soon)

Easthampton Town Lodging & Farm

75 Oliver Street, Easthampton, MA — Regenerative Farm, Veteran Training & Community Hub



Regenerative Farming & Land Renewal

- **2-year 4-season training** via FVC's H.I.V.E. holistic training
- **Build soil health**, sequesters carbon, revives ecosystems
- **Farm products** for CSAs, food banks & local markets



Wellness & Veterans Services

- **~15 veterans/yr** transitioning through the program
- **~900 veteran farmers** in Massachusetts
- **Trauma-informed care**, WRAP, peer support & VA benefits



Affordable Housing

- **15–17 units** — studio, 1BR & 2BR mix
- **Dignified housing**, replacing outdated SRO model
- **Historic rehab** preserving 135-year building character



Community Hub

- **Serving community** with local partnerships (e.g. Gardens)
- **Agri-tourism & community workshops** reviving Easthampton's farming roots
- **Connecting veterans & farmers** across Western MA

RESTORING HISTORIC HERITAGE

Founded in 1890, the Easthampton Town Farm is the **oldest surviving municipal lodging farm in the United States**. For 60 years it provided shelter and sustenance through farm work and communal living. Protected by **historic preservation, affordable housing, and agricultural restrictions**, we aim to preserve a 135-year legacy of social purpose and land stewardship.



Capital Plan: ~\$6.8M

- ~\$3M debt, tax credits, CPA & Mass Development
- Development financing by Advocates for Human Potential
- Program funding opportunities + donors support
- Ag & training investment via USDA, VA & philanthropy

Completed ✓
Appraisal & Enviro

Summer 2026
RFP Award & Close

Sept 2026
Ag Land Planning

Dec 2027
Construction Starts

Sept 2028
First Cohort Begins

Disaster Preparedness, Relief, & Recovery

Strengthen the resilience, recovery, and long-term viability of farmer veterans affected by natural disasters, economic shocks, and crisis through:

- Coordinated relief efforts
- Strategic partnerships
- Veteran/USDA recovery programs.
- Disaster preparedness through education and outreach.
- Expand FVC's ability to deliver support through broader network coordination.



Fields 4 Valor & Food Insecurity

The goals for this program are:

- Reduce food insecurity in underserved veteran communities.
- Encourage farmer veterans to be food security leaders by donating or selling directly to their local food banks.
- Increase visibility and public support for veteran-led food security initiatives, such as community gardens.



Government Affairs

Whereas FVC is headquartered in Waco, TX, it also has an office in Washington, D.C., to better connect with our nation's policymakers on issues important to farmer veterans.

This allows FVC to:

- Strengthen its engagement with lawmakers, federal agencies, and other national organizations that influence ag and veteran-related policies.
- Advocate more effectively for funding, training programs, and resources for members.
- Serve as a hub for connecting farmer veterans with important resources.





www.farmvetco.org
support@farmvetco.org
855-FVC-FARM

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Great Plains Veterans Services Center (GPVSC)

Kasi VanSandt, MPH, Veteran Support
Services Manager

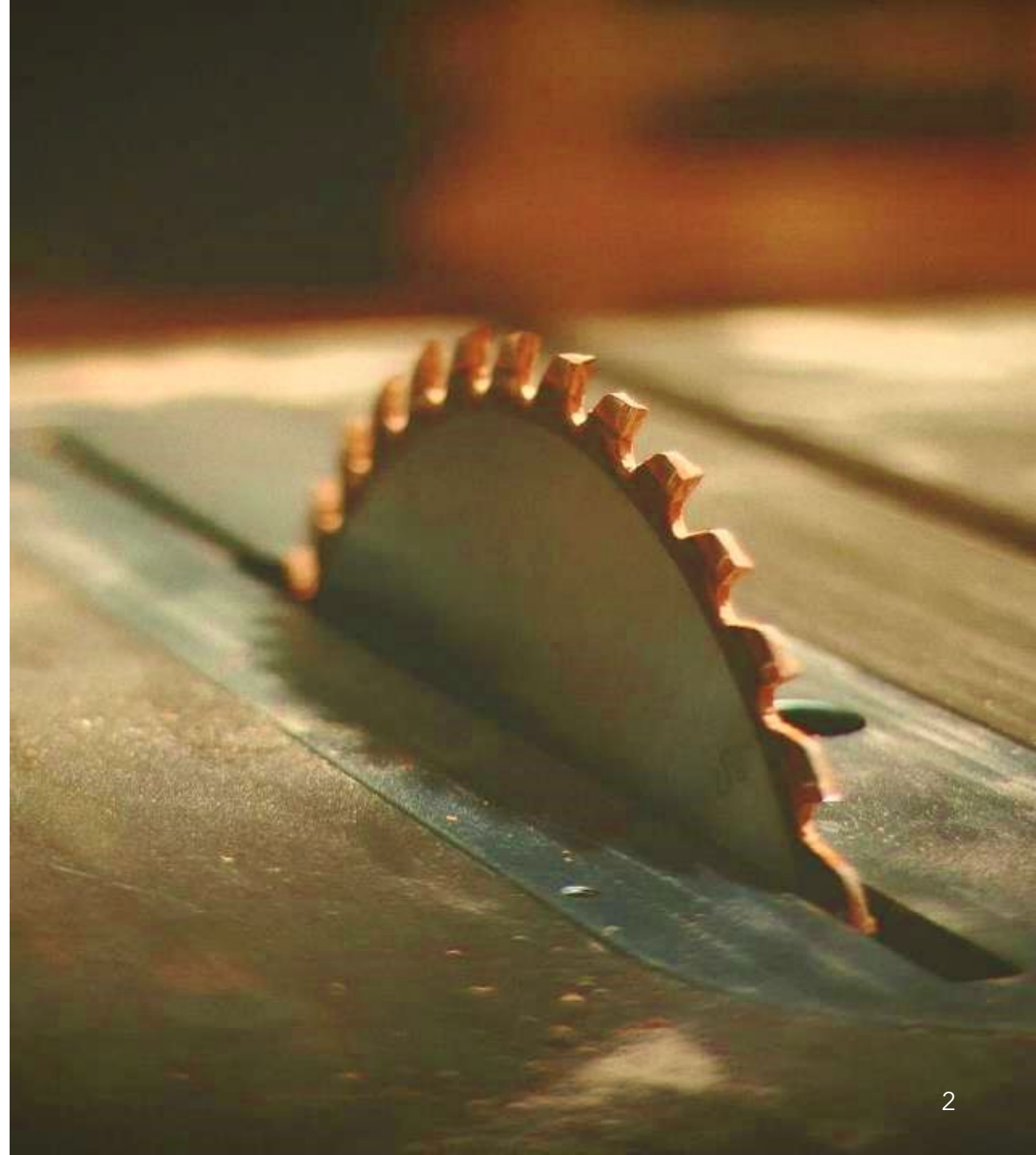
Overview

Who is GPVSC?

Different Departments

Looking Forward

Questions



GPVSC...

- Was founded in 2015 and received recognition as a 501c3 in 2016.
- We exist on three different tribal reservations serving five tribes (Chippewa, Cree, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, and Blackfeet).
- While we exist on tribal reservations, we serve all Veterans.
- Our mission is, “Veterans helping Veterans for a better future”.
- In 2017, the Veteran Support Services (VSS) program was established.
- Transportation has always been an important part of GPVSC. We received the Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG) in 2020.



Different Departments

Veteran Support Services (VSS)

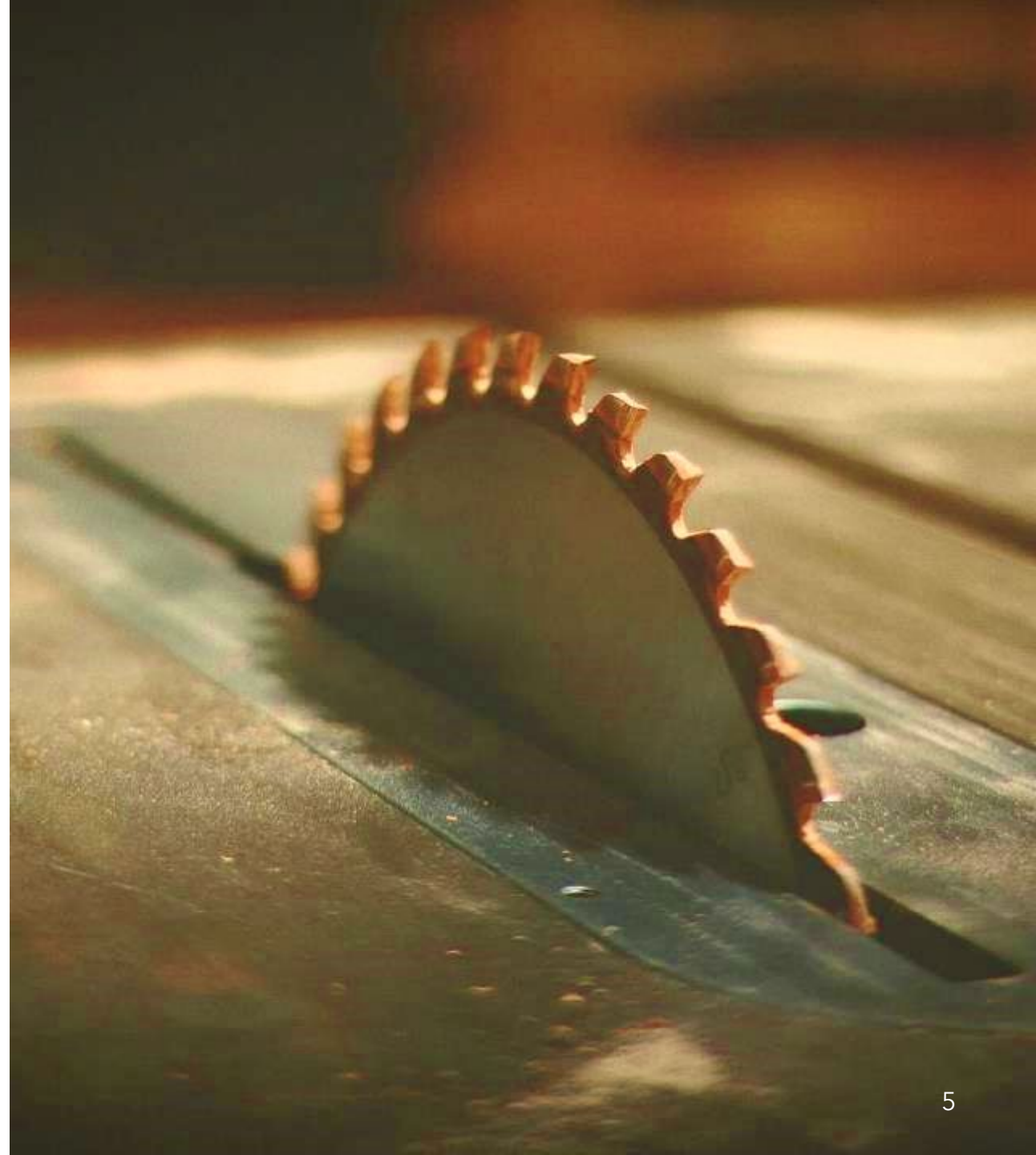
Veteran Transportation Services (VTS)

Organizational Services

Look Forward

Writing for opportunities to grow our service.

VSS is expanding to include more support for our clients.



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several slices of cork bark stacked together. The slices are circular and show the characteristic porous, layered structure of cork. The colors range from light tan to dark brown. A dark blue semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the top left portion of the image, containing the text 'Questions?'.

Questions?

If you have any questions that come up after this meeting, you can reach me at kvansandt@gpvsc.org.