



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

LFIR # 1538

1. Project Title Center For K9 Operations - The Nation's Largest Service Dog Training Center for American Veterans

2. Senate Sponsor Travis Hutson

3. Date of Request 11/04/2021

4. Project/Program Description

K9s For Warriors provides lifelong care and wrap around support to Warriors suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and/or Military Sexual Trauma as a result of military service during any era of service. Our program is centered around pairing veterans with certified Service Dogs, which are rescued from Florida shelters and trained by us. Currently our waiting list extends into May of 2025 and continues to grow. The need for non-pharmaceutical treatment for PTSD continues to grow. K9s response is to build the nation's largest Service Dog training facility to meet the growing veteran demand for Service Dogs. This facility will allow 200-300 dogs to be rescued and trained as Service Dogs every year. This will allow 100-200 veterans with PTSD, TBI, or MST to receive a life saving service dog. Additionally, this facility will include a veterinary clinic and training areas for veterinary resident rotations to enhance their exposure to shelter medicine.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Veterans' Affairs

State Agency contacted? Yes

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	12,500,000
Total State Funds Requested	12,500,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	12,500,000	50%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	12,500,000	50%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2022-2023	25,000,000	100%

8. Has this project previously received state funding? No

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future funding likely to be requested? No

a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.

b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.



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10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

No

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

11. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	These funds will be used to complete the construction of the K9s For Warriors' Center For K9 Operations.	12,500,000
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		12,500,000

12. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

K9s For Warriors works to end veteran suicide and return warriors to a life of dignity and independence. This funding will be used to provide wrap around services, support, and training for the 104 active Florida Warriors; a trained service dog, housing, meals, equipment, veterinary care, and 120 hours of on-site training to an additional 12 new Warriors; and development of a Caregiver Support Program for the spouses, children, or other family and friends who are the direct support-givers to the Warriors.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

As a response to the stress veterans experience from PTSD, TBI, or MST, K9s provides lifelong peer-to-peer support, suicide intervention, crisis intervention, family and spousal support, and assistance with any other issues that a veteran may need assistance with to maintain stability in their life. This may include placement in an in-patient or out-patient mental health program; connection to financial aid and resources, such as rent, utility, or emergency financial assistance; legal support for cases of discrimination or denial of services; and assistance navigating federal VA benefits and resources, including assistance with applying for benefits and services and appealing denial of service or benefits. Finally K9s provides training and support focused on the unique needs of spouses, children, and other family members serving as Caregivers for our Warriors.

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?



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We provide direct peer support, suicide intervention, crisis intervention, and family/spousal support. Additionally, we train and prepare veterans to use a service dog. This includes pre-screening of both veterans and dogs for suitability, training for the dog as an ADI-certified service animal, an in-person 120 hour training course for the Warrior with the dog at a K9s For Warriors facility, and ongoing follow up and monitoring for the veteran and their service dog. The 3 week on site training includes disability and public access law education, daily living and coping skills, human and animal bonding, community re-integration, and 3 weeks of housing and meals during on-site training. Finally, Caregivers of the Warriors will receive dedicated staff support and training on focused on their needs as spouses facing a unique set of experiences and challenges and how to support their veterans in seeking help.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

We serve male and female veterans of all eras of service who have been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Military Sexual Trauma. We have learned that these veterans are not the only ones that benefit from what we do. Spouses and caregivers, children, other family members, and entire communities all benefit, because veterans, with the help of their Service Dog and the lifelong support from the K9s For Warriors family, are no longer solely focused on the invisible wounds of war. We have over 100 veterans who will receive ongoing support during the project period.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

K9s For Warriors has partnered with Purdue University to conduct studies which scientifically evaluate the therapeutic efficacy of K9s For Warriors' Service Dogs on the mental health and wellness of military veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These studies measured the physiological response to stress and arousal using the hormone Cortisol, as well as the baseline following receipt of a Service Dog, but not while receiving usual care alone. Those with a K9s' Service Dog had Cortisol levels returning to normal. Both studies showed a direct link between having a K9s Service Dog and a reduction in PTSD symptoms. Please see attached studies published in the Psychoneuroendocrinology Journal and Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. Additional studies are forthcoming.

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?

In the event K9s For Warriors fails to meet the contractual deliverables, the financial consequences would be that FDVA hold funding until compliance is achieved.

13. The owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

K9s For Warriors, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit entity.



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14. Requestor Contact Information

a. First Name Last Name

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number Ext.

15. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type

- ☐ For Profit Entity
- ☒ Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- ☐ Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- ☐ Local Entity
- ☐ University or College
- ☐ Other (please specify)

d. First Name Last Name

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number

16. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number