

2026 DeKalb County District 6 Funding Proposal

A. Veterans Programming

I. Purpose of Funding

Funds allocated from District 6 will serve 2 programs benefitting veterans in DeKalb County:

- The Department of Veteran's Affairs Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) **Art in Community Program**
- **Financial aid** for veterans to participate in Callanwolde's general programming

II. Need for Funding

Funding from District 6 will support two programs empowering healing and community building for 89 veterans in DeKalb County. Veterans face a high rate of mental health concerns following civilian reintegration, with [41% of veterans in need of mental health treatment in 2024](#). A high proportion of veterans also experience difficulty with relationships, including 45% reporting difficulty with intimate partnerships and 61% reporting job-related difficulties. These factors contribute to higher rates of poverty and housing instability (Ruiz et al., 2022). Isolation, loss of community, and lack of social support make veterans 1.5 times more likely to complete suicide, with 17 veteran deaths reported every day (US Dept. Of VA, 2023). Protective factors have been shown to improve when individuals participate in sustained, community-based social supports and programs that promote a strong sense of belonging (Drebing et al., 2018). Through strategic partnerships with the VA, Callanwolde is able to deliver a coordinated system of community interventions, allowing the VA to implement evidence-based practices and clinical oversight to support the healing and wellness of DeKalb County veterans.

III. Description of Programming

Callanwolde is partnering with PRRC to provide in-community arts programming that connects the VA's clinical staff and therapy programs of the VA with our premier arts education resources to promote positive mental health outcomes for veterans.

Participants receive high-quality arts instruction and develop a meaningful sense of belonging within their classes. The VA's PRRC program uses Callanwolde's Art in Community class as their final phase of support for veterans completing their rehabilitation journey and transitioning to independent civilian life. Many alumni of this 2-year clinical program continue to take classes at Callanwolde, some even going on to teach their own—like our Veteran's Quilting class taught by PRRC graduate Rhonda

Lawson. The Alumni Jewelry class also consists of veterans who have completed the PRRC course, giving them a place for sustained connection with their newfound healing communities, as well as a place to continue exploring their artistic practice. Financial aid funding is essential in allowing alumni veterans to continue taking art classes at Callanwolde once they have completed their clinical program. The alumni community at Callanwolde acts as a safety net, providing protective factors that work to keep veterans engaged in community and support systems.

Requirements for participant attendance:

- PRRC:

PRRC has a quarterly requirement for their participants and they acquire hours that are signed off by their group facilitator. Graduation from their clinical program is associated with reaching hour requirements.

- Veterans Programming:

Our classes do not require attendance. However, the alumni veterans have a demonstrated attendance and commitment as they have completed the PRRC program. Their attendance in classes is notably high.

IV. Length of Programming

The PRRC program runs for 24 weeks each year (three 8-week quarters). Participants attend 1 time per week. The dates for each quarter are as follows:

- March 22-May 11th
- June 14-August 10th
- Sept 14-Nov 9th

Financial aid will be utilized for the first quarter. Participants will attend 1 time per week. The Winter quarter dates are as follows:

- Jan 11th-March 16th.

V. Budget

The yearly cost for each of these programs is listed below:

- PRRC Art in Community for 32 students is estimated at \$3,891.
- Financial aid for 2 alumni veterans to take general Callanwolde classes for one quarter is estimated at \$1,109.

- Each program receives the following per participant:
 - PRRC: \$122 per participant
 - Veteran Financial aid: \$554 per participant

Please see the attached budget for a detailed breakdown of program expenses.

WORKS CITED

- Drebing CE, Reilly E, Henze KT, Kelly M, Russo A, Smolinsky J, Gorman J, Penk WE. Using peer support groups to enhance community integration of veterans in transition. *Psychol Serv*. 2018 May;15(2):135-145. doi: 10.1037/ser0000178. PMID: 29723015.
- Ruiz F, Burgo-Black L, Hunt SC, Miller M, Spelman JF. A Practical Review of Suicide Among Veterans: Preventive and Proactive Measures for Health Care Institutions and Providers. *Public Health Rep*. 2023 Mar-Apr;138(2):223-231. doi: 10.1177/00333549221085240. Epub 2022 Apr 9. PMID: 35403486; PMCID: PMC10031829.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2023). *National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2023/2023-National-Veteran-Suicide-Prevention-Annual-Report-FINAL-508.pdf>