

Compeer Rochester, Inc. - Andy Rawdon

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Organization Profile

Organization Name	Mail Address
Compeer Rochester, Inc.	259 MONROE AVE, ROCHESTER, NY 14607-3632

Exec. Name	Contact Name	Phone	Email
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Mission/Vision Mission Statement: Through the power of human connection, Compeer serves as a bridge to better mental wellness and community integration for all.

Vision Statement: We envision a day when all communities embrace individuals and their families living with mental health challenges; when prevention begins early with children and their families; when living, learning, working and volunteering in the community is given expression through the social inclusion of all individuals and supported by the power of human connection and hope.

Receive County Funds? YES - 1) Provider Agreement with CCSI issued on behalf of the Monroe County Office of Mental Health in its role as the local governing unit under Article 41 of the NYS Mental Hygiene Law. It is for Family Support for Children & Youth for \$91,603 for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. Deliverables: One-to-One volunteer-based supportive relationships to youth in mental health care (and their families) using the evidenced-based Compeer Model; and Tracking. Contact: Melody Simmons melodysimmons@monroecounty.gov.

2) Monroe County Skillbuilding Services for \$47,801 for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. Deliverables: 626 Service Units @ \$76.35 per unit. Contact: Melody Simmons melodysimmons@monroecounty.gov.

3) Monroe County Youth Bureau: Contract pending OCFS approval of 2022 Plan for Monroe County for \$23,274 for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. Deliverables: Youth Mentoring. Contact is Brent Whitfield brentwhitfield@monroecounty.gov.

4) Provider Agreement (2720) with CCSI issued on behalf of the Monroe County Office of Mental Health in its role as the local governing unit under Article 41 of the NYS Mental Hygiene Law. It is for \$287,904 for January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. Deliverables: One-to-One volunteer-based supportive relationships to adults in mental health care using the evidenced-based Compeer Model; and Tracking. Contact is Melody Simmons melodysimmons@monroecounty.gov.

5) Monroe County Veterans Support Services: We have a Professional Services Agreement with Monroe County for \$170,000 for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022. Deliverables: Peer Mentoring; Group Activities; Community Outreach; Planning; and Tracking.

Div. of Corp. N/A? no

Proposal Information

Project Name CompeerCORPS Vets-Driving-Vets

Summary CompeerCORPS helps Veterans overcome reintegration challenges experienced in the transition from active deployment to civilian life. The project represented by this request is an expansion of our well-received Vets-Driving-Vets program, a service that matches Veterans who lack reliable transportation with a volunteer driver (also a Veteran) who use their own vehicle to bring Veterans to medical appointments, shopping, job interviews, events and activities. Our rationale for expansion is since the current drivers are volunteers, we cannot accommodate all ride requests because: 1) there are not enough drivers, 2) who are available in specific areas of the community, 3) at needed times. Funding from this grant will allow us to hire drivers (Veterans) who will provide rides with limited restrictions on time and destination. The grant will also support a full-time staff person to promote the program and schedule rides to ensure efficiency. Finally, we are requesting funding to purchase an 8-passenger van.

Workforce/Economic?	Health/Safety?	Infrastructure/Sustainability?
no	yes	no

Description a. How will the proposed project advance any of the three Bring Monroe Back goals?

This project will advance the PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY of Monroe County by providing a solution to an overarching barrier encountered by Veterans, transportation. Without a reliable form of transportation, many Veterans in our community struggle to access medical and mental health care, as well as activities available to help them reintegrate into civilian life following military service. The expansion of Vets Driving Vets, an existing service under CompeerCORPS, will mitigate this challenge.

Vets Driving Vets has provided over 4,000 rides since its inception in 2017. The expansion of Vets Driving Vets to include paid Veteran drivers is essential, as the current reliance on volunteer drivers and personal vehicle use is no longer accommodating the high volume of rides requested. The impact goes well beyond attendance at CompeerCORPS events to include transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other community events. The presence of a peer driver, specifically a fellow Veteran, is what distinguished this service from traditional medical and non-medical transportation services, providing a layer of comfort that is imperative in some riding situations. In addition, Veterans who live in the City of Rochester will have increased access to activities offered outside city limits, such as hiking, horsemanship, and snow sports.

The goal of CompeerCORPS is to help Veterans overcome challenges experienced in the transition from active deployment to civilian life. This is accomplished through peer support, reducing the isolation felt by many returning Veterans that may prevent them from actively engaging in the community. Since the launch of CompeerCORPS in 2011, we have adjusted our programming to address the specific challenges faced by Veterans and their families, such as facilitating group activities instead of hierarchical mentoring relationships between Veterans.

Veteran participation is the catalyst for other Veterans to participate, re-develop social skills over time, and successfully reintegrate. Therefore, we focus on providing Veteran-only events, female Veteran-only events, and Veteran family events. Activities are offered year-round, both indoors and outdoors. CompeerCORPS has successfully engaged Veterans in group activities from painting to adaptive sports. However, if Veterans have no form of reliable transportation, the opportunities may be missed. Vets Driving Vets is an appropriate and responsive service to meet this need.

Demographics as of June 30, 2022:

-Sex: Female = 15%; Male = 85%

-Race/Ethnicity: White = 66%; Black/African-American = 20%; Hispanic = 13%; Asian = 1%

-Age: 18-34 = 38%; 35-54 = 31%; 55-74 = 27%; 75+ = 4%

-Socioeconomic Status: Although we do not collect household income data on our clients, 100% report a residence address within a U.S. Census Block identified (as of the 2020 American Community Survey--2021 data will be released on September 15, 2022) as having an average income at or below the Federally-defined poverty level for a family of four.

b. Is this project possible without ARPA funding? How will the project be sustainable after 2026?

Vets Driving Vets was developed in partnership with Lifespan as a way to engage older Veterans as volunteers and increase transportation for riders. Since then, 33 volunteer drivers have given over 4,000 rides to over 200 unduplicated riders. The support and camaraderie developed in this program results in opportunities for informal conversation, support and friendship--important components in achieving the goal of reintegration following military service. Without ARPA funding, the project can and will continue. However, as noted above, volunteer drivers cannot fill the need entirely. There are more requests for rides than we can accommodate. COVID-19 limitations resulted in only 56 unfulfilled ride requests in 2021. However, this year through July 26, 2022, there are already 83 unfulfilled ride requests due to a lack of drivers.

Since we do not charge riders for this service, revenue sources will be individual, corporate and foundation support. Funding from this grant will create a new structure to further develop the program and allow for a formal evaluation period to assess its effects on Veteran health. Funding will also help us grow and maintain a volunteer base and opportunities for Veterans with prescribed work therapy.

c. Describe if/how your program will increase accessibility or eliminate barriers to the proposed project (e.g., access, cost, need for childcare, etc.).

The lack of reliable transportation alternatives is a barrier to Veteran participation in both necessary appointments (medical, housing, benefits, jobs) and quality of life events and activities. Vets Driving Vets gives Veterans the opportunity to eliminate this barrier to their recovery.

d. What will your project accomplish - what are the additional measurable and non-measurable metrics your program will achieve that will positively transform our community?

Increasing a Veteran's access to community resources, through free and reliable transportation goes a long way toward helping Veterans overcome the daily challenges they experience. In addition to the obvious benefit of easily getting to appointments, events, etc. The actual time spent in travel is an opportunity for informal conversations, emotional support, and social interaction.

e. How will your project continue to impact Monroe County residents beyond 2026?

We envision Vets Driving Vets to be an ongoing program/service that CompeerCORPS can and will continue indefinitely. The need is evident. The solution is effective. Veterans in Rochester and Monroe County will continue to need our cost-efficient, workable solution

that enables increased participation in social integration alternatives that increases quality of life and the social capital of our community.

Company Strengths The Compeer Program originated from a small volunteer program established in 1973 to serve resident patients of the Rochester Psychiatric Center through friendly visits. As patients were discharged to the community through implementation of deinstitutionalization practices through the 1970s, the Office of Mental Health contracted us to provide community-based mentoring services to adults in Monroe County challenged by the isolation and stigma of mental illness. In 1987, we expanded this service to support youth; and in 2003, peer support to the families of these youth was added to provide a holistic approach to mental health. CompeerCORPS for Veterans was added as a new program in 2011.

Compeer Programs have been replicated throughout New York, the United States, and internationally in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The Compeer Model [of Effective Mentoring] has been acknowledged by the American Psychological Association as a Best Practice and is currently re-establishing evidenced-based status through SAMHSA. Compeer has been awarded by former Presidents and foundations and was most recently highlighted as “Community Organization of the Year” in the Tops Rochester St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

Stories of mental health recovery, volunteerism, and relationships facilitated by the program resound through the community 50 years later, showing the ripple effect of positive socialization, mentoring, and intentional friendships. Services are highly sought-after as evident in our waiting lists and large referral network—as we enroll participants, we strive to reduce waiting times. Compeer gained buy-in from the Veteran community through consistent, peer-driven, Veteran-led programming. Since 2015, we have been contracted by the Monroe County Veteran Service Agency as the sole provider of the Private Dwyer Peer Program in our area because of our ability to engage the Veteran population through non-traditional supports, flexible service delivery, and quality programming.

Community Resources a. List all of the proposed partnerships and collaborations that will be used to enhance your project including any agencies or certified minority-owned, women-owned, or veteran owned businesses located in Monroe County.

Our program is well-known and widely-respected in our community. Here is a sample of community organizations on whom our Veterans rely for involvement, encouragement and support:

- Amerks Alumni Association
- RIT Veterans Upward Bound
- Monroe County golf courses
- Blue Star Mothers
- Disabled American Veterans
- Monroe Community College
- Pinot's Palette
- Life Span of Greater Rochester
- Rochester Museum & Science Center
- Foodlink
- American Red Cross
- Sunset Lanes Bowling
- Help Base Greater Rochester
- 360 Collaborative Network
- Veterans Transportation Council
- Western NY Heroes
- Lap Robes for Veterans
- VeracityVRcade
- Toys for Tots
- VFW Post 412
- American Legion Post 1830
- Mission Coffee
- Am Vets
- Seneca Park Zoo
- Family Readiness Group
- Veteran Service Agency
- Combat News–program support
- One Soldier at a Time
- Tap It Bar & Grill
- Crafty Christy's (Woman Veteran Owned)
- RIT ROTC
- Heritage Christian Stables
- Heroes on the Water – Genesee Valley Chapter
- Heritage Outdoor Sports
- Bristol Mountain

Since the inception of CompeerCORPS in 2011, we have partnered with the Canandaigua Veterans Medical Center and Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic. This partner provides assistance in treatment planning for Veterans receiving care within the "Behavioral Health Care Line" who may also benefit from peer mentoring. All VA Behavioral Health Providers are eligible to refer Veterans to CompeerCORPS. We also collaborate on two community events each year.

Since 2015, we have partnered with the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency by referring Veterans there for everything from getting a copy of their DD214 (discharge paperwork), identifying benefits, submitting disability claims, and even death/burial benefit information.

In December, 2020 Compeer Rochester acquired OASIS Adaptive Sports (Outdoor Adventures for Sacrifice in Service), a non-profit organization offering instruction, equipment and support to disabled military Veterans. In this program, Veterans reconnect and resume productive lives by participating in outdoor activities to promote independence, and social/emotional well-being. Sports include: 1) Snow Sports; 2) Archery; 3) Sailing; 4) Horsemanship; 5) Fly Fishing; 6) Ice Skating; and 7) Rowing.

c. List all financial and/or in-kind resources that will support this project outside of this request.

Funding from this grant will support an expansion of an existing program. There are no financial resources outside of this request dedicated to the expansion. However, the program as it operates currently is supported by these program-wide sources: 1) Monroe County Veterans Support Services PFC Dwyer Fund; 2) Mother Cabrini Health Foundation; and 3) Corporate giving through individual fundraisers.

Audience a. Is the community historically underrepresented, a minority population, vulnerable, or generally underserved?

We serve Veterans in Monroe County experiencing mental health problems associated with reintegration challenges upon their return to civilian life. We serve this vulnerable population.

Research confirms that untreated mental health problems among returning military Veterans can result in long-term negative consequences for the affected individuals, their families, communities, and the nation. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) commonly co-occur in combat Veterans, and this comorbidity is associated with higher levels of distress and more social and economic costs compared to one disorder alone.

Research conducted in 2020 found that among Veterans of the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan with primary combat-related PTSD, 69.5% had current comorbid MDD. A linear regression model indicated that more concerns about family disruptions during deployment, more harassment during deployment, and lower ratings of post-deployment social support were associated with more severe self-reported depression symptoms. Interventions that enhance social support as well as societal efforts to foster successful post deployment reintegration are critical for reducing the mental health burden associated with this highly prevalent comorbidity in Veterans with combat-related PTSD.

In New York, 22% of Veterans suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or Major Depressive Disorder. Many struggle to reintegrate into civilian life and their communities. Compounding this stress is a culture that discourages asking for help. Isolation and loneliness is often the result. Veterans with PTSD are consistently found to have a higher incidence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and report significantly higher rates of generally violent behaviors and aggression than Veterans without PTSD.

b. Will the proposed project have any associated costs, fees, financial requests or other obligations to participate that will be asked of the targeted individual(s) or community?

There is no cost to the participants.

Cost 1st Year	Cost All Years	Residents 1st Year	Residents All Years	FT Employees	PT Employees
\$189,630.00	\$659,467.00	27,500	27,500	2	7

Volunteers
15

Staffing Funding from this grant will support the expansion of our Vets Driving Vets program by enabling us to hire 1.0 FTE Dispatcher (Veteran preferred) whose duties will include promoting the program through community-wide presentations and word-of-mouth outreach, scheduling rides, mapping out efficient routes, establishing driver schedules, record-keeping, monitoring vehicle usage and maintenance, and filling in as a driver when needed.

Funding from this grant will also support 2.0 FTE Drivers (most likely 3-4 part time staff the sum total of which will equal 2.0 FTE). The drivers will pass a background check, have a current valid NYS drivers license, and be a military Veteran.