



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO ANNOUNCES MORE THAN
\$469,000 IN ARPA FUNDING FOR COMPEER ROCHESTER'S
"VETS DRIVING VETS" INITIATIVE**

Funding to support Veteran-to-Veteran Transportation, Enhance Community Connection and Improve Access to Essential Services for Monroe County Veterans

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today joined Congressman Joe Morelle, the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency (VSA), Monroe County Office for the Aging and Monroe County Legislators to announce \$469,817 in America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds awarded to Compeer Rochester's Vets Driving Vets program. This initiative hires veterans to provide transportation services to other local veterans in need.

The ARPA funding will enable Compeer Rochester to expand the program, supporting veterans in accessing critical Veterans Affairs (VA) services, medical appointments, grocery store trips and Monroe County Veteran Service Agency programs, such as the Nature-Based Therapy Initiative.

"On Veterans Day weekend, as we honor our service members, we also recommit to providing them with the support they've earned. It is our responsibility to ensure veterans, who have devoted their lives to protecting our freedoms, have reliable access to vital services," **said County Executive Bello**. "Thank you Compeer Rochester and the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency for partnering on this initiative that provides transportation will also fostering a sense of camaraderie and building connections among veterans. A special thank you to Congressman Joe Morelle, Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and the Monroe County Legislature for their dedication in securing and approving this essential funding."

"The Vets Driving Vets program is bridging the gap for our veteran community and ensuring they have access to care and support when they need it," **said Congressman Joe Morelle**. "This funding will help Compeer expand their reach and create a stronger community of veterans helping fellow veterans. I was proud to help secure ARPA funding for our community and I am grateful for County Executive Bello's partnership as we work to support our veterans and uplift families across Monroe County."

Previously, Vets Driving Vets operated solely as a volunteer service, where veterans used their personal vehicles to transport fellow service members. With this new ARPA funding, Compeer Rochester has now purchased two dedicated program vehicles – one of which is wheelchair accessible – and hired two full-time military veteran drivers. This expansion enables Compeer Rochester to increase the frequency and accessibility of rides for veterans throughout Monroe County.

“Providing vital support to our veterans is more than a shared responsibility, it is a promise we must keep,” **said U.S. Senator Charles Schumer.** “I fought hard to secure American Rescue Plan funds to strengthen programs like Compeer Rochester’s Vets Driving Vets, which will meet veterans where they are in our community. The expansion of the Vets Driving Vets program, with new dedicated vehicles and full-time veteran drivers, will ensure our local veterans have the transportation they need to access critical VA services, medical appointments and community resources. This investment will enhance their quality of life and reaffirm our commitment to those who served. I applaud County Executive Adam Bello and Compeer Rochester for their innovative work and dedication to our veterans.”

“Transportation can often be a barrier to receiving necessary health care, and other critical services. Through Compeer Rochester’s Vets Driving Vets program, now Monroe County veterans will have a more frequent and reliable method to access the services they need. I commend County Executive Bello for his leadership, and support of this initiative. I’m proud to have secured this funding through the American Rescue Plan Act, and will keep fighting to ensure our veterans have the resources they need to lead healthy lives,” **said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**

“Thank you to my partners in government for making this investment possible for the Vets Driving Vets program. This initiative honors our veterans by providing transportation services but also increases access to vital services,” **said Legislature President Yversha Román.** “A heartfelt thank you to Compeer Rochester and the volunteers for their work and dedication to our Veterans. Your work ensures our veterans can access the resources and support they deserve.”

“Kudos to the County Executive, the Office for the Aging and Compeer Rochester for partnering to expand services to our veterans. We can never do enough to thank those who have served our country. The community of veterans is known for supporting each other and this program will enhance those efforts,” **said Majority Leader Michael Yudelson.**

“Supporting our veterans is not just a priority—it’s a duty,” **said Republican Leader Steve Brew.** “With this investment in Compeer Rochester’s Vets Driving Vets program, we’re empowering veterans to empower other veterans, fostering self-reliance and community strength. This expansion ensures that our nation’s heroes have the resources they need to access vital services, reinforcing Monroe County’s commitment to honor their service with real, tangible support.”

In 2024 alone, Vets Driving Vets provided 708 rides to 88 service members, enabling veterans to build trust and connect with other veterans who understand their experiences. This program not only provides essential transport but also fosters bonds and community connections, offering veterans an additional pathway to vital resources and support networks.

“Our veteran community has always been the first to step up, not only by protecting civilians, but taking care of each other. For the last 15 years, CompeerCORPS has facilitated the invaluable resource of vet-to-vet support and it is our honor to now provide safe, reliable and comfortable transportation for veterans, by veterans. We accept these funds with gratitude and pride as we look ahead to continued expansion of the service,” **said Compeer Rochester CEO Sara Passamonte.**

“I am grateful that County Executive Bello, and our federal partners in government like Congressman Morelle continue to invest in the resources required to support our Veterans. This will fill a critical need that veterans have had regarding transportation and specifically difficulty they have had in getting to medical appointments, and other programming,” **said Nick Stefanovic, Director of the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency.**

Veterans interested in participating in the program are encouraged to provide a 72-hour advance notice. Interested military service members can apply for the program at compeerrochester.org/requestaride or by calling (585) 313-7528.

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