



**CLEVELAND COUNTY
RECOVERY PROGRAM**

Cleveland County provides additional ARPA funding to support Veterans

Commissioners award additional \$170,000 to support four more local veterans organizations

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NORMAN, Okla. (May 19, 2023) - After awarding the American Legion Post 88 with \$330,000 in November 2022, Cleveland County Commissioners voted to obligate the remaining \$170,000 of veteran-focused American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support four additional local nonprofits who serve veterans throughout Cleveland County.

“Today, on the eve of Armed Forces Day, Cleveland County is proud to partner with these organizations in an effort to help hundreds of veterans, service members and veteran families receive the benefits they deserve,” said County Commissioner Rod Cleveland. “Along with improving their quality of life, these well-deserved benefits come back to Cleveland County as income when those who have served our nation purchase goods and services here, creating long-term economic impact for our community as whole.”

The Norman VFW Post 4890 will receive \$6,000, Envision Success will receive \$67,000, Lexington’s American Legion VFW Post 301 will receive \$67,000 and Dale K. Graham Veterans Foundation will receive \$30,000. This brings Cleveland County’s total ARPA investment in veterans to \$500,000.

“The County’s support for veterans through ARPA funds will be critical in the recovery from the pandemic,” said Jon Foti, chief executive officer of the Dale K. Graham Veterans Foundation. “These funds will strengthen our efforts to serve all those veterans who were unable to receive help throughout the pandemic.”

The VFW/American Legion Post 301 in Lexington and Envision Success for Veterans located in Norman both plan to use the majority of their ARPA dollars for much-needed building and technology improvements.

“The veterans of southern Cleveland County are excited to use the provided funds from the grant towards improving our building,” said Jimmy Hight, American Legion Post 301 Historian. “We would like to thank the commissioners of Cleveland County for putting needed emphasis towards the veterans in the county.”

Gail P. Wilcox, Founder and Executive Director for Envision Success for Veterans is also grateful for the support. “Thank you to the Cleveland County Commissioners for trusting and supporting Envision Success for Veterans,” Wilcox said. “This grant will enable us to improve our technology programs, security, and accessibility while making our location even more welcoming for the veterans and family members that participate in the programs we offer.”

By committing ARPA dollars to nonprofits that serve veterans, county officials are able to build on the natural collaboration and existing coordination already found among these local organizations.



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“On behalf of the Norman VFW Post 4890 we are very grateful to the Cleveland County Commissioners for making the monies available to help make a better community,” said Fred Zacher, post quartermaster of the Norman VFW Post 4890. “We will use the grant to help our fellow veterans and their spouses receive the benefits they've earned and deserve.”

Support of veteran organizations is consistent with Cleveland County’s commitment to veterans, including a full-time County Veteran Services Coordinator Charlie Neely.

“Cleveland County Veterans Coordinator Charlie Neely partners closely with a number of veterans’ organizations,” said County Commissioner Rusty Grissom. “He is certified as a Veterans Affairs Accredited Service Officer which allows him to submit claims directly to the Veterans Benefit Administration on behalf of veterans and their families, but one person can only do so much. By working with this network of veteran organizations and awarding them ARPA funds, we can bolster the network of support for all of our Cleveland County Veterans.”

Cleveland County was awarded \$55 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide critical support for our residents while also improving infrastructure and mitigating the economic impacts caused by the pandemic. The commissioners set aside \$4 million specifically for nonprofit support with a focus on vulnerable populations such as veterans and those affected by behavioral health issues. Of that, \$500,000 is specifically designated to nonprofit veterans groups in Cleveland County who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

About Cleveland County

Cleveland County covers more than 500 square miles and a steadily growing population of close to 300,000 people (2020 census), making it the third most populous county in Oklahoma.

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