

Paralyzed Veterans of America Summary Report

Information about the Applicant

Paralyzed Veterans of America – Wisconsin Chapter (PVA-WI) has existed for over 40 years, supporting Wisconsin's paralyzed veterans. During this time, PVA-WI has coordinated, organized, and executed programs to best meet our members' needs. PVA-WI proudly serves Veterans with a spinal cord injury or disease, including those with MS and ALS. PVA-WI aims to improve the quality of life for our American veterans and others with spinal cord injury disease or dysfunction through our programs: advocacy, research, adaptive sports and recreation, education and communication. We work closely with the Zablocki VA Medical Hospital Spinal Cord Injury Unit to promote involvement in national and local activities that support PVA's mission without federal funding. PVA-WI achieves our mission through the following objectives: 1) to advocate for and monitor the delivery of high-quality and appropriate healthcare benefits and services; 2) to assist in identifying and securing veterans' benefits and other benefits for spinal cord injured and diseased veterans and others; 3) to promote medical research to cure spinal cord dysfunction and disease; 4) to educate society on the attitudes, physical and legal barriers which confront persons with disabilities and to influence the removal of those barriers; and 5) to provide opportunities for health promotion, recreation, employment, sports, services, camaraderie for spinal cord injured veterans and others. We are proudly Wisconsin's only 4-star charity navigator rated 501(c)(3) veteran service organization.

PVA-WI strives for continuous improvement in all aspects of our programming and operations, especially over the past two years. PVA-WI sponsors our first Salmon-A-Rama event at Reef Point Marina on Lake Michigan. Our members had a productive time on the water, enjoyed experiencing the event with their peers, and caught plenty of fish. During this event, PVA-WI experienced the lack of accessibility at marinas, which led to PVA-WI securing funding from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation to purchase five Hoyer lifts to increase accessibility at publicly owned marinas. Additionally, PVA-WI hosted our first three-day Adaptive Sports Bootcamp with twenty-five veterans to prepare them for the National Veteran Wheelchair Games and provide opportunities to learn from each other and participate in new activities. For our members, participating in new activities is critical for the promotion of overall well-being through activity and peer mentorship to achieve mental and physical wellness.

Statement of Need

Paralyzed Veterans of America is seeking a grant to assist with the 2023 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp. The 2023 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp will be a three-day event, with 50 members, trainers, and coaches facilitating team building and adaptive sports activities. The adaptive sports activities include track and field, frisbee golf, bocchia ball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair football, wheelchair softball, powerlifting, badminton, tennis, pickleball, adaptive fitness, bowling, billiards, and cycling. The PVA-WI will pay for transportation, lodging, and caregiving support. Each participant will receive a water bottle, gym bag, t-shirts, and a cooling towel. This event includes two overnight days, including accessible dining options and providing accessible lodging.

PVA-WI is partnering with Roc Ventures for their state-of-the-art facility and Milwaukee County Parks Department for their facility as well. Businesses such as New Glarus Brewing Company and Amazon provide volunteers. We also partner with recreational therapists from the Zablocki VA Spinal Cord Injury Unit, Greater Lake Adaptive Sports Association, and Wisconsin Adaptive Sports Association to support the Bootcamp activities. These collaborations are in-kind donations agreed upon after the 2022 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp.

Project Goals and Expected Benefits

The goals of the program align with overall program outcomes. PVA-WI seeks to increase our members' overall well-being by scaling our adaptive sports programming with our second Adaptive

Sports Bootcamp in 2023. The second goal is to prepare our PVA-WI members for the 2023 National Veteran Wheelchair Games by creating an event where they can participate in a series of adaptive sports events. The third goal is to increase access to these opportunities within a socially inclusive community to empower our paralyzed veteran members living with SCI. The expected final result of this project is to build a community for PVA-WI that increases the overall well-being of the veterans and provides them with a peer support network to prevent mental and physical issues. PVA-WI hopes to continue to scale the Adaptive Sports Bootcamp to include more community members through wheelchair football and rugby expos to reduce the stigma of disabilities and build more socially inclusive societies.

Project Implementation Plan

The implementation plan for this event is below. Funding would be best suited to be received two to three weeks before the implementation begins.

The project plan for this project goes from January 2023 - June 2023.

- Jan. 24 - we share the save the date with members and reach out to partners
- Jan. 26 – we review the draft schedule for the three days and share it with partners which adaptive sports they lead
- Jan. 28 – Staff reviews the draft of the participant registration and reviews budget
- Feb. 4 - Finalize event plans at the venue, Milwaukee County Sports Complex in Franklin, team building activity, and Root River Bowling Alley
- Feb. 7 – Registration opens, and all materials placed on the website
- Feb. 14 – Solidify all contracts with hotels and secure all ADA rooms
- March 15 – Participant registration closes
- March 18 – Order all required t-shirts and participant materials
- April 1 – Registration opens for volunteers after discussions with partners leading specific sports
- April 5 – Develop participant survey
- April 30 – Registration closes for volunteers
- May 1 – Purchase all other snacks and necessary supplies
- May 6 – Share volunteer assignments and logistics
- May 9 – Run of show with all parties involved
- May 10 – Pack all participant materials
- June 1 – Send statements of gratitude to all appropriate parties
- June 4 – Review participant survey results

Evaluation Plan

The following outcomes will be used to measure the effectiveness of the 2023 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp and monitored by the Executive Director using a qualitative and quantitative survey:

Outcomes	Target Dates
Increase overall adaptive sports activity time by 500 hours by providing 20 hours of conditioning and practice sessions at the 2023 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp	June 2023
50 PVA-WI members will increase their activity level within a peer mentoring environment after the Adaptive Sports Bootcamp through peer mentorship relationships	June 2023

20 PVA-WI member athletes will be better prepared and conditioned to compete in t 2023 National Veteran Wheelchair Games	June 2023
90% of PVA-WI members report an increase in overall well-being	June 2023
Net Promoter Score from participants over 85	June 2023

Budget

FY23 Therapeutic Adaptive Sports			
Item	Cost per participant	# participants	Total
Lodging	\$250	40	\$10,000
Lunch 15-17 May	\$12	180	\$2,160
Dinner 15 May	\$15	60	\$900
Printed Materials	\$5	40	\$200
Team Building Activity	\$30	60	\$1,800
PVA-WI SWAG tshirt, bag	\$75	60	\$4,500
Equipment/equipment rental	\$100	40	\$4,000
Staff Support	\$61 per hour - 2 staff: ED and Sports Dir.	40	\$2,196
Total			\$25,756

Staff Recommendation

The grant application can be recommended for approval of the requested amount of \$10,000.00. The proceeds will be applied toward items that directly benefit the disabled participants in the Adaptive Sports Bootcamp. The grant aligns with the initiatives of the Foundation.

