



## **Wounded Warrior Project Expands Support for Wounded Veterans and their Families with New Funding for Farmers in 2021**

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) expanded partnerships to include 12 new and existing veteran and military service organizations to help meet the needs of our nation's wounded, ill, and injured veterans and their families.

Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) was one of the dozen awarded. A national non-profit serving nearly 25,000 veterans turned farmers, FVC creates a new generation of farmers and food leaders while simultaneously offering our veterans a place to heal on America's farms.

WWP funding will directly support the Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund. It's a small grant program that provides assistance to veterans in the early stages of their agricultural careers with the purchase of a piece of equipment. For hundreds of members, the Fellowship Fund has made the difference in the viability of their farming operation.

Like WWP, FVC believes that every warrior has a next mission. Farming provides the kind of mission-oriented work that many veterans found satisfying while in the military, in addition to offering them a sense of purpose, opportunity, and physical and psychological benefits.

As member Davon Goodwin of North Carolina puts it, "the camaraderie you lose when you exit the military, you gain that through FVC." Davon was injured in Afghanistan in 2010, which altered his life goal of pursuing a PhD in Botany. He transitioned into farming instead with the idea of providing the same commitment to his community as a farmer that he did as a soldier.

"When I got on the farm I felt reinvigorated, I felt life. I felt like there was a connection between humans and soil," acknowledges the prior Fellowship Fund awardee. "When I put my hands in the dirt, it changed me."

This funding from WWP will support 36 new fellowships - at least half of them designated for female veterans - on their next mission: they have served their country once by defending it, and now a second time in feeding it.

The Fellowship Fund program directly aligns with WWP's mission by connecting, serving, and empowering wounded warriors that have experienced physical and emotional harm.

It connects recipients into FVC's vast network of veterans to combat geographic and psychological isolation so common to farmers, while establishing a sense of community and camaraderie that mirrors the fellowship of military service.

It serves those who have served our country. For many, the purchase of equipment gives "wounded warriors" with physical limitations the ability to do work on their farms that their physical limitations would otherwise prohibit.

It empowers by giving veterans the financial assistance they need to launch a farming business, and the opportunity to use their existing skills from military service to succeed as an agricultural professional and earn a meaningful, financially sustainable place in the agricultural community.

WWP is providing their 2021 partners more than \$2.3 million combined total in grants to expand the impact of WWP's existing efforts and to fill gaps in programs and services. "The military and veteran community organizations that we work with help us fill critical gaps in care, ensuring that America's injured veterans and their families have access to the resources they need to thrive," said WWP CEO Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Mike Linnington. "We're proud to support these amazing organizations and the diverse spectrum of services and programs they provide. Through these grants we are strengthening the communities where these warriors, and their families, work and live."

Since 2012, WWP has granted more than \$271 million to 192 veteran and military service organizations. Learn more about WWP's [community partnerships](#).