



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

How does one measure the success of “Veteran support?”

While I feel an immense sense of pride for the statistics that follow, impact as interpersonal as ours can't be communicated with numbers alone.

You need to feel the grateful handshakes and watch the genuine smiles grow across the faces of our resilient Veterans. You need to see the tears in the eyes of a Veteran and their family when you hand them the keys to their new apartment. You need to experience the long hours and late nights that our amazing team puts in to make our mission a reality.

Our work is not about adding zeros to statistics. It's about the Veterans. It's about those moments, big and small, that illustrate our contributions to people's lives.

From event highlights to personal stories of resilience, the 2023 Nation's Finest Impact Report provides a comprehensive look into the change we are creating. Please take a moment to read through this report and join us at a Nation's Finest event near you to see for yourself how we can transform lives together.

Thank you for contributing to the impact of Nation's Finest today, yesterday, and tomorrow.

Sincerely,

**Chris Johnson, CEO**

## OUR MISSION AND VALUES

### 2023 ushered in another year of progress toward realizing our mission:

Supporting America's Military Veterans and their families with a comprehensive approach to housing, health, and employment that helps them achieve self-sufficiency and reach their full potential.

Through work reflecting our core values of respect, integrity, empathy, transparency, and inclusion, we held true to our mission. We helped our Veterans find the resilience evident in the statistics, highlights, and stories throughout this report.

# GUIDING VETERANS HOME SINCE 1972

7,524

WE SERVED OVER SEVEN THOUSAND VETERANS IN 2023

\$32M+

WE INVESTED OVER 32 MILLION DOLLARS INTO OVER 40 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN 2023

## ACT NOW

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT NOW MORE THAN EVER TO AMPLIFY OUR IMPACT



Neal, U.S. Army Veteran  
Mather Veterans Village

## Programs & Services

At Nation's Finest, we're dedicated to supporting Veterans in need. Our comprehensive services, including housing assistance, therapy, job training, legal support, and personalized case management, address issues like homelessness, unemployment, and mental health challenges - all under one roof.

Our experienced team guides Veterans through the complexities of accessing benefits and creates tailored plans for their unique needs.



Housing Assistance



Homelessness Prevention



Mental Health Support



Case Management



Employment Services



Mobile Support

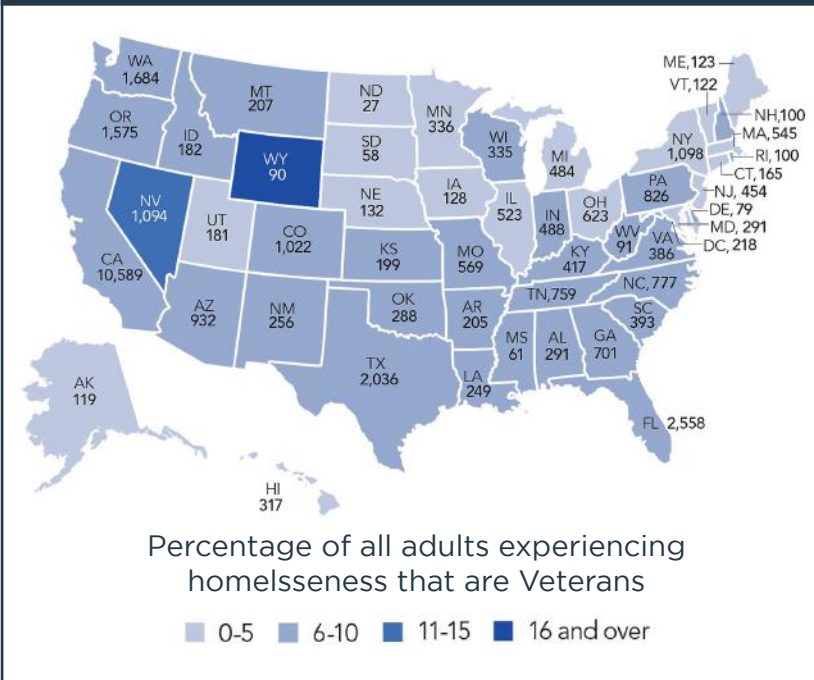


# THE CHALLENGE

## 35,500+

On any given night in 2023, 35,574 Veterans in the U.S. experienced homelessness. Of those Veterans, 20,067 were sheltered and 15,507 were unsheltered.\*

### Estimates of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness By State, 2023



### NATION'S FINEST FOCUSES ON SERVING VETERANS IN MOSTLY RURAL AREAS

## 44%

of rural Veterans earn less than \$35,000 annually.

## 58%

of rural Veterans enrolled in the VA have a service-connected condition.

## 27%

of rural Veterans do not access the internet at home.

\*Data supported by the Housing and Urban Development 2023 Point-in-Time count and the Department of Veterans Affairs

## MORE NUMBERS THAT DRIVE US

- In 2023, 22 out of every 10,000 Veterans experienced homelessness.
- The number of homeless Veterans increased 7.4 percent in the same period, the largest increase in 12 years.
- Nearly all Veterans (98%) were experiencing homelessness as individuals. Of those individuals, 30% had chronic patterns of homelessness.

## 17

Veterans, on average, die by suicide per day

## 1.3M

Veterans had a substance use disorder in 2019

## 4M+

Veterans, more than 30% of the Vet population, are living with a disability

## 7%

of Veterans will have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in their lifetime

With more than 31 locations in 15 mostly rural communities in California, Arizona, and Nevada, each year, we provide critical services and support for over 7,000 veterans and their families.

Our facilities are staffed by a diverse, professional, and talented group of individuals who are committed to serving all veterans in a respectful and positive way. While we tailor our approach to the individual needs of each veteran, our services generally fall under a few broad categories. **Learn more at [NATIONSFINEST.org](https://www.nationsfinest.org)**

# \$1.2M+

Invested into affordable housing for Veterans, including the construction of apartment units and voucher assistance for low-income families



# 123,714

Meals provided



# 41,238

Bed nights

# \$11.2M+

Provided in temporary financial assistance to Veterans facing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness



# 2,678

Veterans and their family members stabilized through our Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program

Nation's Finest is one of the largest SSVF providers in the country by geographic reach!



# 1.3K+

Veterans found a permanent place to call home



# 3,600

Clinical group hours to Veterans and their families



# 580+

Veterans served with clinical services to improve mental health



# 250+

Jobs secured for Veterans and family members

A photograph of a desert landscape with a river and a road sign. The road sign on the left has the numbers 8, 13, and 13. The text 'HITTING THE ROAD FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T' is overlaid in large, white, bold letters.

# HITTING THE ROAD FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T

## Why Nation's Finest Went Mobile

The idea behind the Nation's Finest MSU program is simple yet powerful: leave no Veteran behind. In rural areas, accessing care can be difficult due to limited resources and remote locations. We have seen firsthand how these challenges can adversely affect Veterans and hinder their successful reintegration into civilian life.

Initially launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, the MSU program aimed to connect isolated rural Veterans with health and medical services. The response was overwhelming, demonstrating a clear need to expand our fleet of MSUs and increase our capacity to provide care.

Our mission is to hit the road and reach those who can't come to us, ensuring that all Veterans receive the care and support they need to lead fulfilling lives.



## MSU PROGRAM

### The Mobile Service Unit Impact

Each year, one MSU can assist 350 Veterans through one-on-one engagement and telehealth, connecting them to various programs and services. In 2023, Nation's Finest expanded the reach of this innovative program, serving an additional 250 homeless and low-income Veterans and their families.

Homeless and at-risk Veterans served through the program experienced an 80% placement rate into permanent housing and a 20% increase in annual income. In 2024, Nation's Finest plans to double the program's size, increasing our capacity to deliver care and services to Veterans and their families in need.



**Why MSUs Are Critically Important:**

**4.7M**

VETERANS LIVE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES WHERE ACCESS TO CARE IS LIMITED

**35K**

OVER 35,000 VETERANS ARE HOMELESS ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT

**50%**

OVER 50% STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS



**“This is a really good program that has helped me out tremendously in a very short amount of time.**

**- Robert, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran**

Robert, a U.S. Marine Corp Veteran, signing a new lease in rural Nevada after working with a Mobile Service Unit to secure stable housing for him and his son.

# WHO WE SERVE

## BRANCH OF SERVICE



AIR FORCE: 12%



ARMY: 47%



COAST GUARD: 3%

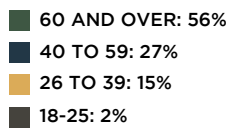


MARINES: 15%

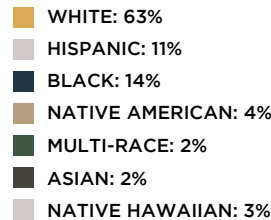


NAVY: 23%

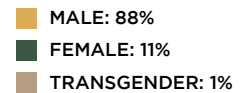
## AGE



## RACE



## GENDER



## Top Counties Continuum of Care (CoC) Served:

1. Washoe County (NV)
2. Sacramento County (CA)
3. Shasta County (CA)
4. Nevada (Rural - balance of state)
5. Mohave County (AZ)
6. Monterey County (CA)
7. Yavapai County (AZ)
8. Butte County (CA)
9. Sonoma County (CA)
10. Santa Clara County (CA)

CoC's are regional or local planning bodies that are responsible for coordinating the funding and delivery of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in their service areas.

**57%**

Have at least one mental health issue

**31**

Brick and mortar service locations

**40+**

Counties served in CA, AZ, and NV

**60%**

Have sought help with employment

**15**

Mostly rural communities

**61%**

Have at least one disability





## A LEGACY OF LIGHT

### Remembering Kenneth Gray's Journey of Resilience and Community

In 2023, we lost a special person in our community—Kenneth Gray. His passing has left a lasting mark on us all, and we honor this special U.S. Navy Veteran. A true fighter with a heart full of creativity, his life wasn't easy, especially after serving in the Navy during the tense Cold War times and then facing tough challenges back home, like homelessness and personal loss. But Ken had a special way of turning the tough stuff into something beautiful. He stumbled into stained glass art almost by accident, finding beauty in broken pieces of glass. This wasn't just a hobby for him; it was a way to heal and to make something bright out of the darkness. His art showed his incredible resilience and ability to see the good in everything.

Later in life, Ken became the heart and soul of Windsor Veterans Village, where people lovingly called him the "Mayor." He wasn't just about making art; he was all about bringing people together and creating a warm, supportive community for fellow veterans. Whether it was through organizing events or just being there for a chat, Ken made a huge difference. His story isn't just about the challenges he overcame; it's a reminder to us all about the power of community, creativity, and never giving up, no matter what life throws at you. Ken's legacy shines not only through his art but in the strong, caring community he helped build.

***"The day that I walked in here, I was blown away. It was so beautiful. It was so roomy. I was blessed and I felt it in my heart."***

- Kenneth Gray, "Mayor" of Windsor Veterans Village



# NATION'S FINEST 50 AWARD



To honor our 50th Anniversary, we created the Nation's Finest 50 Award to honor other leaders who, like our founders, have gone above and beyond to support our Veterans and their families.

From politicians and entrepreneurs to TV personalities and athletes, these 50 heroes came from all walks of life to embody the Nation's Finest mission with their advocacy

Our awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., allowed us to foster valuable connections with policymakers and advocates at the forefront of today's pressing Veteran issues. This award increased Nation's Finest's visibility on a national scale and will continue to propel us forward throughout the next 50 years.

*"The Nation's Finest 50 Award is a big deal because Nation's Finest is an organization that started over 50 years ago by three men who wanted to support Veterans which is near and dear to my heart."*

- Ginger Miller, Nation's Finest 50 Award Recipient

*"Today, we get to honor and celebrate those great patriots who have given their time, their resources, and their full emotion to support Veterans and their families with the Nation's Finest 50 Award."*

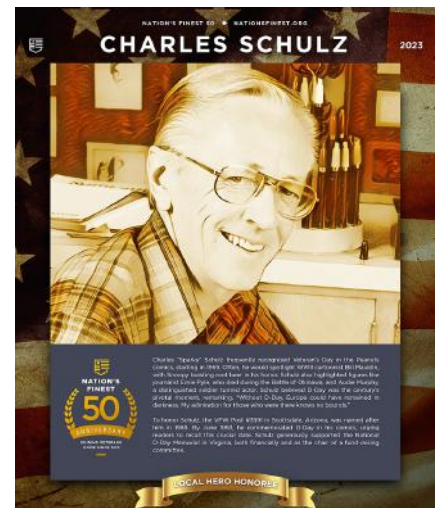
- Major General Retired Spider Marks

## NATION'S FINEST 50 Community Awareness Program

Building off the success of our Nation's Finest 50 Award, we launched the Nation's Finest 50 Community Awareness Program to reach more Veterans in need and honor local Veteran advocates making a difference.

The program traveled into communities across California, Arizona, and Nevada to highlight Veteran stories and heroes within them. Thanks to our efforts, the pressing issues of Veteran homelessness, unemployment, and mental health struggles came to the forefront of public attention.

In areas where our services are needed, Nation's Finest is now top of mind thanks to new connections with local Veteran activists and policymakers.



***"How many times do we walk past the Veteran on our street who is talking to themselves because they have not gotten the help that they need and deserve?"***

- Darrell Steinberg, Mayor of Sacramento

# STORIES OF RESILIENCE

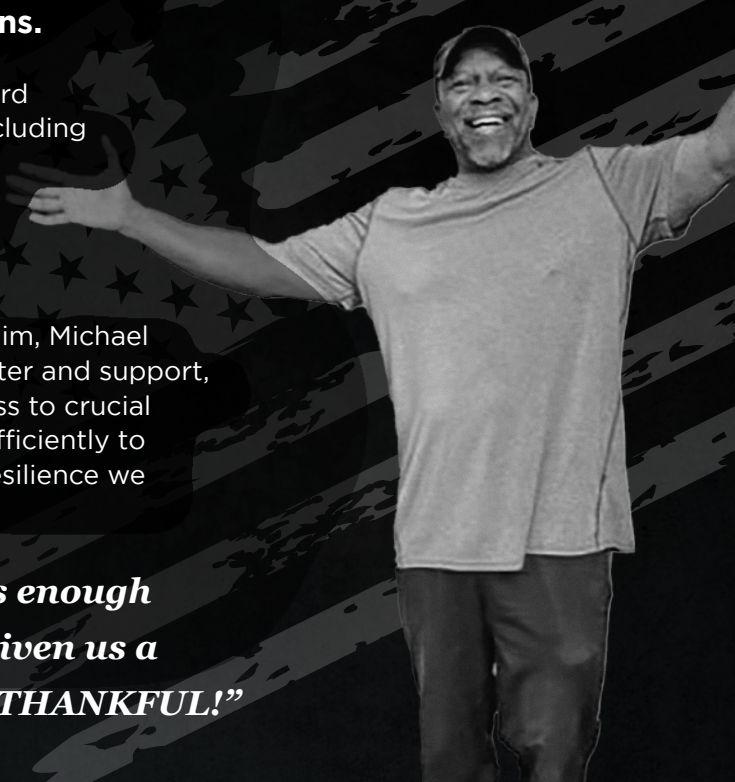
**Nation's Finest is shining a spotlight on powerful stories inspired by the resilience of our country's Veterans.**

Michael, a disabled Marine Corps Veteran, fell into a downward spiral during the pandemic. Struggling with health issues, including a heart attack, prostate cancer, and type 2 diabetes, he also battled internal demons such as PTSD and depression. By the early 2020s, Michael found himself homeless on the streets of Solano County.

In just a few days of discovering the assistance available to him, Michael was enrolled in a Nation's Finest program that provided shelter and support, effectively getting him off the streets. He also received access to crucial mental health services and regained his physical strength sufficiently to resume regular workouts. Michael's journey embodies the resilience we hope to instill in those who've served.

***“My family and I will never be able to express enough gratitude... Their unwavering support has given us a second chance in life, and we are FOREVER THANKFUL!”***

- Michael, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran



Michael, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran



Gordon, U.S. Air Force Veteran  
Residential Case Manager  
Nation's Finest

## Rebuilding with a Purpose

What makes our team so good at instilling resilience in others? They epitomize resilience themselves!

Gordon, a U.S. Air Force Veteran who served in Iraq, struggled to transition to life after service. His journey has led him through eviction, isolation, long nights spent in his car, unemployment, and countless battles with substances to fight his negative thoughts. But, his firsthand experience with these issues helps him foster closer connections with clients at Nation's Finest. The staff at Mather Veterans Village connected him with the mental health support he needed to rebuild his life and exceed his goals.

Now more than three years sober, Gordon is a staff member at Nation's Finest, helping to change others' lives with his empathy and judgment-free support. His courage, strength, and resilience are an inspiration to Veterans everywhere, and our ability to support those who've served would not be possible without role models like Gordon!



## OUR FINANCIALS

Nation's Finest is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Santa Rosa, CA. We've been providing housing for homeless Veterans and a range of other supportive services to Veterans and their families for over 50 years.

Our Federal ID number for donations is 94-2699571. Our CFC number is 71496.

### Revenue

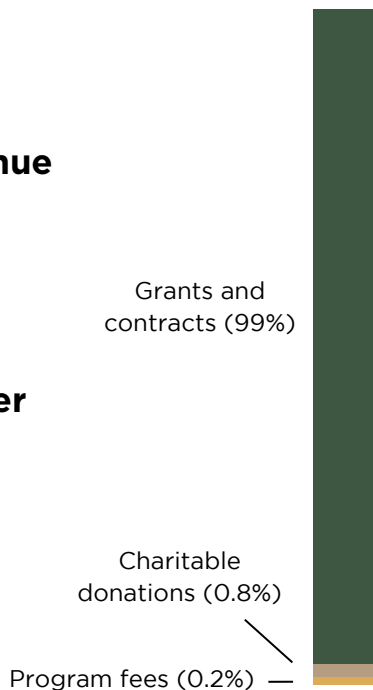
**Grant Revenue**  
\$30,828,909

**Program Revenue**  
\$104,187

**Contributions**  
\$709,773

**Revenue - Other**  
\$323,340

**Total revenue**  
**\$31,966,208**



### Expenses

**Direct**  
\$11,679,773

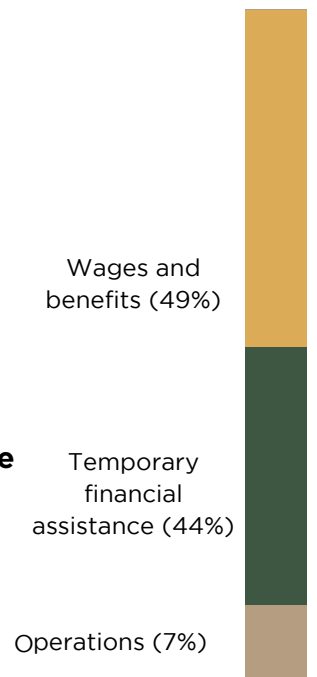
**Salaries and Wages**  
\$12,537,758

**PR Taxes**  
\$3,838,681

**Professional Fees**  
\$952,299

**General and Administrative**  
\$3,576,009

**Total expenditures**  
**\$32,584,520**



# HELP US HELP THEM

## Change the Life of a Veteran in 2024

The “Veteran stories” of Ken, Michael, and more are not stories. They are real lives changed by the support of community members like you.

You can give the gift of hope to a Veteran and their family by donating to Nation’s Finest. Here’s how you can “Help Us Help Them” this year:

For the price of a streaming subscription, you can make a difference in the lives of our Veterans every month. Multiply your impact by making it monthly.

**\$25** Pays for a warm meal and essential hygiene products for a homeless Veteran.

**\$50** Pays for one hour of mental health counseling for a Veteran.

**\$75** Provides a week’s worth of groceries for a struggling Veter and their family.

**\$100** Pays for one night of sleep in a warm, safe bed, and a meal for a homeless Veteran.

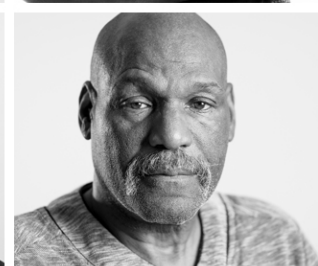
**\$150** Feeds a Veteran for one month in one of our residential facilities.

**\$500** Helps furnish a new home for a transitioning Veteran and their family.

Please consider giving the gift of hope to our Veterans and their loved ones by making a donation to Nation’s Finest!



Scan the QR code or visit  
[NationsFinest.org/donate](https://NationsFinest.org/donate)





# NATION'S FINEST

GUIDING VETERANS HOME  
SINCE 1972

## United for Veterans: Celebrating Our Supporters' Impact

While reflecting on the difference we've been able to make in the lives of our country's Veterans, the Nation's Finest team is overwhelmed with gratitude for the support of our incredible sponsors and donors.

Their belief in our comprehensive approach to Veteran support is what makes the stories you've read throughout this report possible. Every quote, milestone, statistic, and success highlighted stands as a testament to the impact our team can make with support from our community.

Our sponsors and donors provide more than just a financial contribution: they provide the necessary tools for those who've served to stay resilient. Thank you for creating change by being a member of the Nation's Finest family. Together, we will continue to foster resilience for another 50 years.

With gratitude,

The Nation's Finest Team



BOB WOODRUFF  
FOUNDATION





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Human Resources Relations Manager

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**Nick Wood**  
Regional Site Director

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