



NATION'S  
FINEST  
**50**  
ANNIVERSARY

GUIDING VETERANS  
HOME SINCE 1972



**2022**  
**IMPACT**  
**REPORT**



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The other day, someone asked me how we measure success.

I told them about all the things we do at Nation's Finest — the help we give to Veterans in need and their families, all the hot meals we serve, the hundreds of units of temporary and permanent supportive housing we have built, the countless hours of clinical counseling and mental health care we provide, and the job training and employment services we offer.

At that moment, it seemed an easy question for me to answer. Later in the day, I had a chance to reflect on the question about success — how we measure it, what it means to all of us at Nation's Finest — and found that the answer I gave was incomplete, and, in many ways, inadequate.

Like many charities, we gauge the progress we make in pursuing our mission by quantifying everything we do. In 2022, we helped more than 7,000 Veterans in need and their families. At our 31 sites spread across California, Nevada, and Arizona, we made a real difference in the lives of Veterans struggling with chronic homelessness, physical and mental health issues, addiction, unemployment, and accessing the benefits they deserve.

But, for us, the true measure of success is found in all those things you can't quantify.

The way a Veteran stands a little taller after you greet them with a handshake, a smile, and a word of respect. The tears in the eyes of the Veteran and her family when you hand them the keys to their new apartment. The smile that spreads across the face of a disabled, homeless Veteran when one of our Mobile Service Units pulls up in front of his encampment. The sense of pride and accomplishment when a Veteran receives their first paycheck from a job we helped them secure.

It's not about the numbers. It's about the people. The Veterans.

I hope you take a moment to look through the Nation's Finest 2022 Impact Report. It's packed with lots of great information about all the work we did and the things we accomplished in 2022, our 50th Anniversary year. And, it has a few stories that show how the help we give to Veterans in need and their families changes their lives. Forever.

Thank you for being part of our success.

Sincerely,

**Chris Johnson, CEO**

"To honor freedom  
and to understand it is  
priceless. To honor  
being an American  
Veteran is forever.  
Keep up the fire."

General Phlint  
U.S. Army Veteran

  
NATION'S  
FINEST



# WHO WE ARE

Nation's Finest has been Guiding Veterans Home Since 1972, making us among the oldest national organizations serving military Veterans and their families.

We take a comprehensive approach to addressing the individual needs of each Veteran, and we pride ourselves on helping Veterans help themselves.

## WHAT WE DO



**Housing Assistance**



**Homelessness Prevention**



**Mental Health Support**



**Case Management**



**Employment Services**



**Mobile Support**

Some of our locations also provide art therapy, behavioral health support, transitional support after incarceration, and more.

# 31

Brick and mortar service locations

# 14

Mostly rural communities

# 40+

Counties served in CA, AZ, and NV

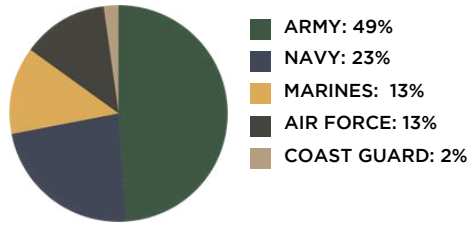


# WHO WE SERVE

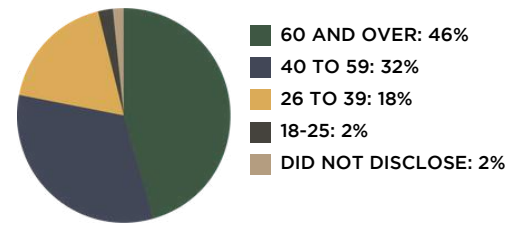
# 51%

Have at least one mental health issue

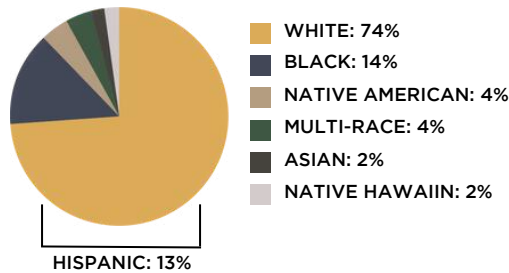
## BRANCH OF SERVICE



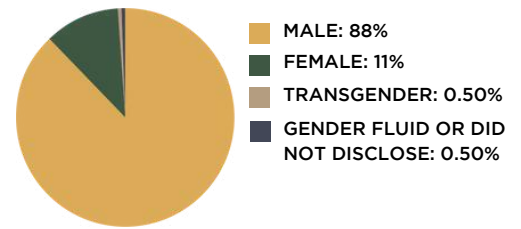
## AGE



## RACE



## GENDER



# 58%

Have at least one disability

## Top Counties/CoC's 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)

## What Are Continuums of Care? (CoC's)

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.

# 60%

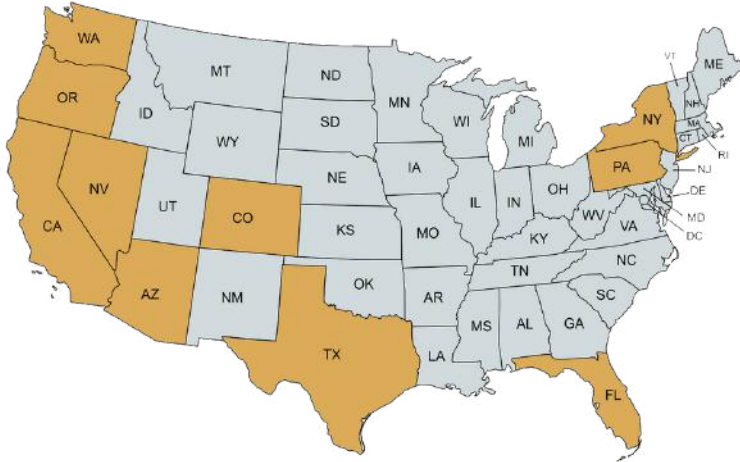
Have sought help with employment



## 33,000+

In 2022, 33,129 Veterans in the U.S. experienced homelessness. Of those Veterans, 19,565 were sheltered and 13,564 were unsheltered.

### STATES WITH THE MOST HOMELESS VETERANS



- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. CA — 10,395 | 6. NY — 990  |
| 2. FL — 2,279  | 7. AZ — 857  |
| 3. TX — 1,711  | 8. PA — 778  |
| 4. WA — 1,569  | 9. NV — 752  |
| 5. OR — 1,460  | 10. CO — 738 |

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

## 4.7M

Veterans live in rural communities where access to care is limited.

## 44%

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

## 54%

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

## 27%

of rural Veterans do not access the internet at home.

### MORE NUMBERS THAT DRIVE US:

- In 2022, 20 out of every 10,000 Veterans experienced homelessness.
- Almost 37,000 people experiencing homelessness were in households that included a Veteran.
- Nearly all Veterans (98%) were experiencing homelessness as individuals. Of those individuals, 20% 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



## 7,000+

Veterans served through residential and community programs, outreach, referrals, and individualized support



## \$3.5M+

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



## 51,429

Meals provided



## 17,143

Bed nights

## \$12.2M+

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



## 4.1K+

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!



## 1.5K+

Veterans found a permanent place to call home



## 800+

Veterans served through community programs



## 600+

Veterans served through residential programs



## 250+

Jobs secured for Veterans and family members



# "YOU BELIEVED IN ME"

Sophia was just 17 years old when she joined the Army after spending most of her childhood in and out of foster care. The military gave her a new life — one that brought her stability while teaching her self-discipline, tenacity, and many other skills that would forever serve her.

However, the stability of being in service only lasted so long. When Sophia transitioned out of the military in 2018, she found herself lacking basic human resources she needed just to survive. After becoming a victim of domestic violence, she began living out of her car, feeling lost, confused, and lonely.

That's when Sophia found Lisa Hoff, a case manager with Nation's Finest. Over the course of time, Lisa helped Sophia with housing, rental assistance, and case management. But more than that, Lisa also gave her hope, healing, and a future to look forward to.

This is Sophia's letter to Lisa, whom she refers to as the "woman who saved her life."

*Lisa — At my lowest point and by the grace of God, I found you.*

*The day after I called Nation's Finest, you met me in the Oxbow parking lot where I was living in my car. You had so much warmth and compassion. For the first time in my life, someone had seen me. YOU saw me.*

*You held such a safe and non-judgmental space for me. You continue to push me, and push, and push, and push, until I somehow know I will make it to the other side. When I hit rock bottom, yours was the hand that assured me there was no darkness I would ever meet alone.*

*Through everything — the long pauses, the times I wouldn't let myself give in to the sobbing and incoherent emotional moments — you stuck with me. You listened, you understood, you cared. You completely changed my perception of humanity. You have been such a light in my chaotic and dark world. You changed my mind about the way I viewed asking for help, as well as the way I looked at myself. Thank you for sticking with me through it all. Thank you for fighting for me. Thank you for being one of the only solid and consistent things in my life.*

*Thanks to you, I'm ready to turn this pain into a masterpiece. Thank you for aiding a new beginning of my life; you changed my future forever. When I had nothing to believe in, you believed in me.*



Thank you for helping me see past the pain I thought would blind me. You didn't have to dismantle my walls. Instead, you made me feel safe enough to tear them down myself so that I could meet you on the other side. I didn't know that could happen. Your words were the tourniquet that stopped me from bleeding out over and over again. Everything was hurting and ugly and raw, but there you were with your bright smile. You met me with fierce love and humility.

I feel so much gratitude because the life I've built for myself — a joyful and wild adventure — was made possible by the tools you gave to me. I feel gratitude because there's no thread of my life you haven't touched and, together, we spun into gold.

The mosaic of lessons I've learned are a compass I will keep close — a true north that will always point me back to the direction of hope restored. Lessons like:

- It's bravery, not perfection, that makes the world a better place.
- It's self-compassion, not discipline, that helps us grow.
- It's vulnerability, not just grit, that makes us stronger.
- It's the doing, the moving, and the growing — not the "finished," "there," and "done" — that makes for a meaningful life.



Looking back, I understand now that I didn't need to be fixed or reassembled. I wasn't broken; I wasn't a mistake. All I really needed was to be seen. Thank you for seeing me.

Take these words, not as payment for a debt owed, but as proof of the flowers you helped me grow. You gave me a priceless gift I could never repay. You gave me new life, love, and something to hold onto. And with all of that, someday I hope to return some version of the strength I borrowed from you.

Until then, thank you. Thank you for being who you've been to me. Thank you for being

Thank you, for you.

♡ Sophia

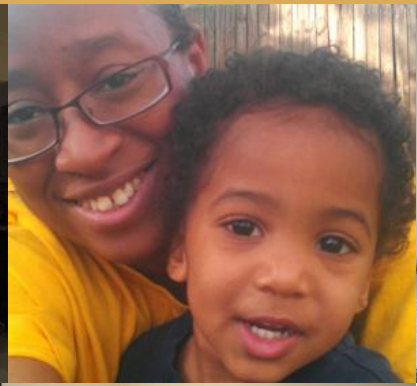


**NATION'S  
FINEST**

**"Nation's Finest built me up  
when I was at my lowest and  
gave me the confidence to  
reach self-reliance once again.  
They had my six from the jump."**

— Marissa, U.S. Navy Veteran

# SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED



**"All of this happened because of something I did 60 years ago. I am in utter shock at the resources Nation's Finest has assisted me with — from housing to transportation, health care management, and much more."**

**— Marty, U.S. Navy Veteran**

# OUR HISTORY

Nation's Finest has been providing Veteran services since 1972, making 2022 our 50th anniversary year. Our story started when four Veterans returned home from Vietnam, only to realize the support and services they needed were not available.

The four Veterans decided to create a nonprofit in Santa Rosa, California, to help fellow Veterans who had fallen on hard times. This wasn't a charity in their eyes, but a sacred duty never to leave a fallen brother or sister behind. The early members felt that allowing fellow Veterans to be homeless, out of work, or lacking basic health care was a form of those Veterans being left behind — something they couldn't stand for.

In 1972, with a starting grant of only \$9,000, Flower of the Dragon was born. And today, now recognized as Nation's Finest, we continue to Guide Veterans Home.



## MAJOR MILESTONES

**1975** We perform critical roles in Operation Babylift — a dramatic airlift that extracted more than 2,000 Vietnamese children from their war-torn countries to be adopted by American families during the fall of Saigon.

**1997** We open a health clinic in Luong Son to serve the impoverished people in Vietnam who were in desperate need of medical care.

**1979** We co-sponsor and organize the first National Symposium on the Issues of Vietnam Veterans to address the impact of the war on Veterans and their families.

**2014** Our Board of Directors establishes a housing subsidiary, Veterans Housing Development Corporation (VHDC), to focus its resources and expertise on responding to the critical need for affordable housing for Veterans.

**1989** We help convince the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs to acknowledge the full spectrum of health impacts on Veterans from exposure to Agent Orange.



# NATION'S FINEST 50

To mark our 50th Anniversary in a meaningful way that would honor our past, present, and future, we launched the "Nation's Finest 50" Award: a national initiative recognizing 50 individuals who, either through their personal actions or leadership, have made a real difference in the lives of Veterans and their families.

*Learn more at [NationsFinest.org/nations-finest-50-award](https://NationsFinest.org/nations-finest-50-award)*

## Blue Ribbon Panel

Our Blue Ribbon Panel, composed of distinguished leaders and professionals from the military and Veteran communities, will determine the 50 award recipients to be honored at a special ceremony in the spring of 2023.



Koby Langley  
Chair of "Nation's Finest 50" Committee;  
Senior Vice President,  
American Red Cross



Marybel Batjer  
Partner, CA Strategies



Gerry Byrne  
Vice Chairman, Penske  
Media Corporation



Richard W. "Dick" Cook  
Former Chair, Walt  
Disney Studios



Eric Eversole  
President, Hiring Our  
Heroes; U.S. Chamber of  
Commerce Foundation



Matthew Freedman  
CEO, Global Impact, Inc.



Shannon Gerber  
Executive Director,  
The Home Depot  
Foundation



Major General James  
A. "Spider" Marks



Kathy Roth-Douquet  
Co-Founder and CEO,  
Blue Star Families



Marcellus Wiley  
NFL All-Pro Athlete



## Hundreds of Individuals Were Nominated!



## Revenue

### Grants and contracts:

\$28,079,318

### Total charitable revenue:

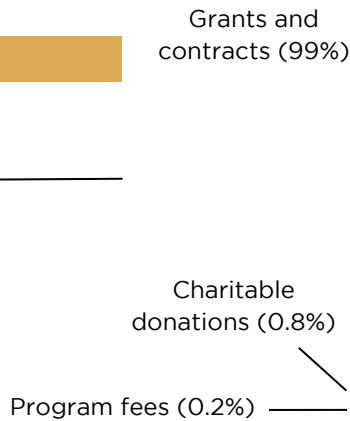
\$250,738

### Program fees

\$90,421

### Total revenue:

\$28,420,477



## Expenses

### Operations:

- Permanent supportive housing
- Transitional & emergency housing
- Employment & job training
- Legal services
- Aftercare case management

\$1,916,744

### Veteran financial assistance

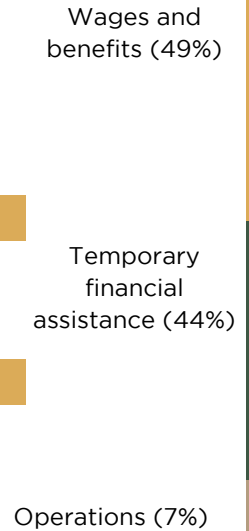
\$11,144,499

### Wages and benefits

\$12,421,692

### Total expenditures:

\$28,095,518



## HELP US HELP THEM

Our Veterans deserve to know that we have their six. After all, they've done the same for us by defending our country and freedom.

Your financial support can help us continue to serve more Veterans in need and change their lives for the better, especially those in rural areas where access to care is limited.

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)





# SENIOR LEADERSHIP

**Chris Johnson**  
President and CEO

**Tom Isakson**  
Community Programs Director

**Robert Charles, CPA**  
Chief Administrative Officer

**John Perales (JP)**  
Human Resources Director

**Jason Henry**  
Chief Growth Officer  
Navy Veteran

**Jim Luper**  
Clinical Services Director

**Kendra Barter**  
Chief Programs Officer

**Brad Long**  
Executive Director, VHDC  
Navy Veteran

**Aaron Hanson**  
Chief Development Officer

**Marissa Garzini**  
Assistant Controller

**Trevor Thomson**  
Compliance Director  
Marine Corps Veteran

**Tiffany Rankin**  
Chief of Staff

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Philip Williams — Chair**  
Attorney | Army Veteran

**Daniel Rusch — Vice Chair**  
Data Architect, United States Olympic  
Committee | Army Veteran

**Larry Connolly — Secretary**  
Retired Philanthropist  
Marine Corps Veteran

**Anne Fabiny, MD — Treasurer**  
Department of Medicine, San Francisco  
VA Health Care System

**Koby Langley**  
Senior Vice President, American Red  
Cross | Army Veteran

**Jim Larson**  
Retired CEO, California State Central  
Credit Union | Army Veteran

**Mary Nicholson**  
Founder, Executive Director  
Healings in Motion

**Jimmy Radford**  
Marine Corps Veteran

**Chuck Helget**  
President, Sector Strategies  
Army Veteran

**Lacey Szekely**  
Owner, Swët Fitness  
Army Veteran



14

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

IN CASE OF FIRE  
BREAK



**NATION'S  
FINEST**



**GUIDING VETERANS  
HOME SINCE 1972**