



# Grant Finalist Summary

**Veteran's Council of Indian River County, Inc.**

**Project:** *Veteran Families: Quality of Life*

**Category:** Health and Wellness

**What They Do:** Support all Indian River County veterans and their families while raising awareness of veterans' needs and of their contributions to society.

**Project Summary:** The Veteran's Council will expand the audience served by its free home repair program for qualifying veterans to include surviving spouses and other family members. The grant enables veteran families to improve the quality of their lives and, in some cases, remain in their home altogether by rectifying safety and accessibility issues.

**More Information:** Veterans relate that when they joined the military, their families joined with them. Spouses raised kids alone. Children endured long absences of a parent. Families faced multiple physical moves, changes in schools, disruption of friendships and longed for roots. And when service members returned with trauma, PTSD or disability, it was the family who helped them recover.

**Population Served:** Veterans who qualify must: 1) be honorably discharged 2) own their home as a primary residence 3) demonstrate inability to afford the repair based on financial statements provided and 4) present a problem which poses a risk to health and well-being. The newly expanded population of veteran family members must be IRC homeowners and meet the following relationship criteria: 1) widow/widower of veteran 2) family member who cares for the veteran in their home or 3) family member who is cared for by the veteran in their home.

**Impact:** Helps to address a multi-million dollar need for home improvements among veterans and veteran families in Indian River County as defined by a 2020 market survey. The COVID pandemic has added to the vulnerability of this population. Anticipate 60 veterans and family members will be helped.

**In Their Own Words:** "The following statement captures the heart of our program - "Veterans are those who wrote a blank check to the American people, payable up to and including their lives." In 2018, we first partnered with Impact 100 on this program and were able to ease the last year of life for a Vietnam veteran with one lung. We removed mold and installed a new shower in his home. At his funeral, his wife introduced our program manager to her son by saying "This is the soldier that helped daddy... with money from those Angel Women I told you about."

– Colonel Marty Zickert, Board Chair, USAF (Retired)

**From the Grant Panel Team:** "The Veteran's Council demonstrated success with their initial Veteran's Helping Veterans project in 2018. A highly organized and disciplined Board with financial and management depth will continue to lead this expanded mission to serve fellow veterans."

**Use of Funds:** 95% of grant dollars go directly to home repairs. Most common requests deal with air conditioning, roof and gutter, mold remediation, water damage, septic tanks, and making homes accessible (ADA).

**Sustainability:** Presented a detailed development plan focusing on grants and major gifts.

**Website:** [www.veteranscouncilirc.org](http://www.veteranscouncilirc.org)