



HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

1. The sponsoring representative's first name:
Jennifer
2. The sponsoring representative's last name:
Conlin
3. The cosponsoring representatives' names. All cosponsors must be listed. If none, please type 'n/a.' A signed letter from the sponsor approving the co-sponsorship and a signed letter from the member wishing to co-sponsor are required. Attach letters at question #9 below.
n/a
4. Name of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
Freedom River
5. Physical address of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
6716 Winans Lake Road. Brighton, MI 48116
6. If there is not a specific recipient, the intended location of the project or activity:
n/a
7. Name of the representative and the district number where the legislatively directed spending item is located:
State Rep. Jennifer Conlin--House District 48
8. Purpose of the legislatively directed spending item. Please include how it provides a public benefit and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding. Please also demonstrate that the item does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution.
Project Overview:
Freedom River is seeking funding to establish the Freedom River Wellness Center, a state-of-the-art facility designed to provide comprehensive wellness services for veterans and their families. The center will focus on holistic healing, suicide prevention, and mental health support through evidence-based programs, peer mentorship, and therapeutic activities in a nature-rich setting.

Problem Statement:

Michigan is home to over 550,000 veterans, many of whom struggle with mental health challenges, including PTSD, depression, and suicidal ideation. Veteran suicide rates remain significantly higher than the general population, underscoring the urgent need for dedicated, accessible wellness services.

Solution:

The Freedom River Wellness Center will directly address this crisis by providing:

- ☐ **Mental Health Support:** Counseling services, peer support groups, and suicide prevention programs tailored for veterans and their families.
- ☐ **Holistic Therapies:** Cooking therapy, massage therapy, acupuncture, mindfulness programs, infrared sauna, fitness center, sound and music therapy.
- ☐ **Outdoor and Recreational Therapy:** Kayaking, hiking, fishing, and adaptive sports to promote mental and physical well-being.
- ☐ **Family and Community Engagement:** Support groups, retreats, and educational programs to strengthen family bonds and reduce isolation.

Impact Goals:

- ☐ Serve over 2,000 veterans and family members annually.
- ☐ Reduce veteran suicide rates by providing timely interventions and mental health resources.
- ☐ Foster community support and reintegration through peer-led initiatives and family programming.

Impact Goals:

- ☐ Serve over 2,000 veterans and family members annually.
- ☐ Reduce veteran suicide rates by providing timely interventions and mental health resources.
- ☐ Foster community support and reintegration through peer-led initiatives and family programming.

9. Attach documents here if needed:

Attachments added to the end of this file.

10. The amount of state funding requested for the legislatively directed spending item.

3000000

11. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received any of the following types of funding? Check all that apply.

["Private"]

12. Please select one of the following groups that describes the entity requesting the legislatively directed spending item:

Non-profit organization

13. For a non-profit organization, has the organization been operating within Michigan for the preceding 36 months?

Yes

14. For a non-profit organization, has the entity had a physical office within Michigan for the preceding 12 months?

Yes

15. For a non-profit organization, does the organization have a board of directors?

Yes

16. For a non-profit organization, list all the active members on the organization's board of directors and any other officers. If this question is not applicable, please type 'n/a.'

Jeff Yeakey – President; Michael R. Haller – Chairman; Beverly Conatser – Vice Chairwoman; Michael B. Staebler – Secretary; Ken Michalak – Treasurer; Ronald Hughes – Director; Janna Yeakey – Executive Director; Sean Duval – Director; Joanna Hardesty – Director; Nikki Grodus -Director

17. "I certify that neither the sponsoring representative nor the sponsoring representative's staff or immediate family has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the legislatively directed spending item."

Yes, this is correct

18. Anticipated start and end dates for the legislatively directed spending item:

Oct. 1, 2025 to Oct. 1, 2027

19. "I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is true and accurate."

Yes



Freedom River Wellness Center Grant Request

Requested Funding Amount: \$3,000,000

Organization Name: Freedom River, Inc.

Organization Mission: Freedom River is dedicated to serving veterans and their families by providing an inclusive, nature-based retreat that fosters healing, connection, and resilience. Through outdoor recreation, wellness programs, and community support, we strive to combat the challenges veterans face, including post-traumatic stress and mental health struggles.

Project Name: Freedom River Wellness Center

Project Overview: Freedom River is seeking funding to establish the Freedom River Wellness Center, a state-of-the-art facility designed to provide comprehensive wellness services for veterans and their families. The center will focus on holistic healing, suicide prevention, and mental health support through evidence-based programs, peer mentorship, and therapeutic activities in a nature-rich setting.

Problem Statement: Michigan is home to over 550,000 veterans, many of whom struggle with mental health challenges, including PTSD, depression, and suicidal ideation. Veteran suicide rates remain significantly higher than the general population, underscoring the urgent need for dedicated, accessible wellness services.

Solution: The Freedom River Wellness Center will directly address this crisis by providing:

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- **Family and Community Engagement:** Support groups, retreats, and educational programs to strengthen family bonds and reduce isolation.

Impact Goals:

- Serve over 2,000 veterans and family members annually.
- Reduce veteran suicide rates by providing timely interventions and mental health resources.
- Foster community support and reintegration through peer-led initiatives and family programming.

Funding Utilization: The \$3,000,000 grant will be allocated as follows:

- **Facility Construction:** \$1,500,000
- **Program Development & Staffing:** \$600,000
- **Mental Health Services & Partnerships:** \$400,000
- **Equipment & Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure:** \$500,000

Conclusion: The Freedom River Wellness Center represents a critical investment in the well-being of Michigan's veterans. By funding this initiative, the State of Michigan will play a pivotal role in reducing veteran suicide rates and fostering a community of healing, resilience, and hope.

Contact Information: Janna Yeakey

Executive Director, Freedom River

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janna.yeakey@freedomriver.org

www.freedomriver.org