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CalVet Grant to Expand Mental Health Services for California Veterans Awarded to Nation's Finest Amid Rising Suicide Rates

California Veterans Health Initiative Mental Health Support Program Aids Critical Outreach During National Suicide Prevention Week

Santa Rosa, CA - As veteran suicide numbers rise in California, with 570 veteran lives lost in 2024, a new California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) grant awarded to [Nation's Finest](#) is bringing renewed hope. Nation's Finest, a Santa Rosa-based nonprofit that has been providing support to over 3,000 veterans annually for over 50 years, has been selected to receive funding through CalVet's California Veterans Health Initiative (CVHI) Mental Health Support (MHS) program to expand mental health services, prioritizing veterans in California who face barriers to accessing and receiving care.

As we head into Suicide Prevention Month and National Suicide Prevention Week (September 7-13), we highlight the urgency and relevance of this initiative in our work to save veterans' lives.

"The start of services for this grant was a pivotal moment," said Chris Flaherty, CEO of Nation's Finest. "We cannot think of a better opportunity to expand our reach and help veterans realize their full potential. This mission is personal for me, as a veteran who once faced a mental health crisis, I know firsthand how life-changing timely intervention can be."

The CVHI program is designed to address mental health disparities among veterans and their families, especially those facing geographic, cultural, or social barriers to care. Nation's Finest, with the support of the CVHI-MHS grant has concentrated its expanded outreach efforts in California's North Valley region and provides:

- Accessible and compassionate encouragement and outreach coupled with vital mental health services and resources.
- A comprehensive suite of outpatient clinical services to underserved areas.
- Individual, family, couples, and group therapy.
- Peer support.

"CalVet is glad to partner with Nation's Finest and support the important work they are doing to help California veterans and their families. Their efforts will help expand the state's capacity to

provide mental health support to veterans and to fill gaps in mental health services,” said Roberto Herrera, California Department of Veterans Affairs’ Deputy Secretary of the Veterans Services Division.

Nation’s Finest has been focused on mental health services since its inception and currently has multiple ongoing programs, including a suicide prevention team in Santa Rosa ([SSG Fox](#)), multiple Nation’s Finest locations with clinicians, health care navigators and peer support specialists providing mental health services, and a [Mobile Service Unit](#) that aims to meet veterans, especially those in rural/remote areas, where they are and provide services that are usually more difficult to access or limited. Nation’s Finest has two California-based MSU’s rolling in Eureka and Santa Rosa.

[Nation’s Finest](#) has provided supportive services to veterans and their families for over 50 years. The nonprofit uses a comprehensive and personalized approach to housing, health, and employment to help veterans achieve self-sufficiency and reach their full potential. Nation’s Finest provides critical services and support to over 3,000 veterans annually at 31 locations in 15 mostly rural communities in California, Arizona, and Nevada.

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