



## Building a Healthy Veterans Community \$6 Million Capital Campaign

**CASE FOR SUPPORT FOR A NEW SERVICE CENTER**

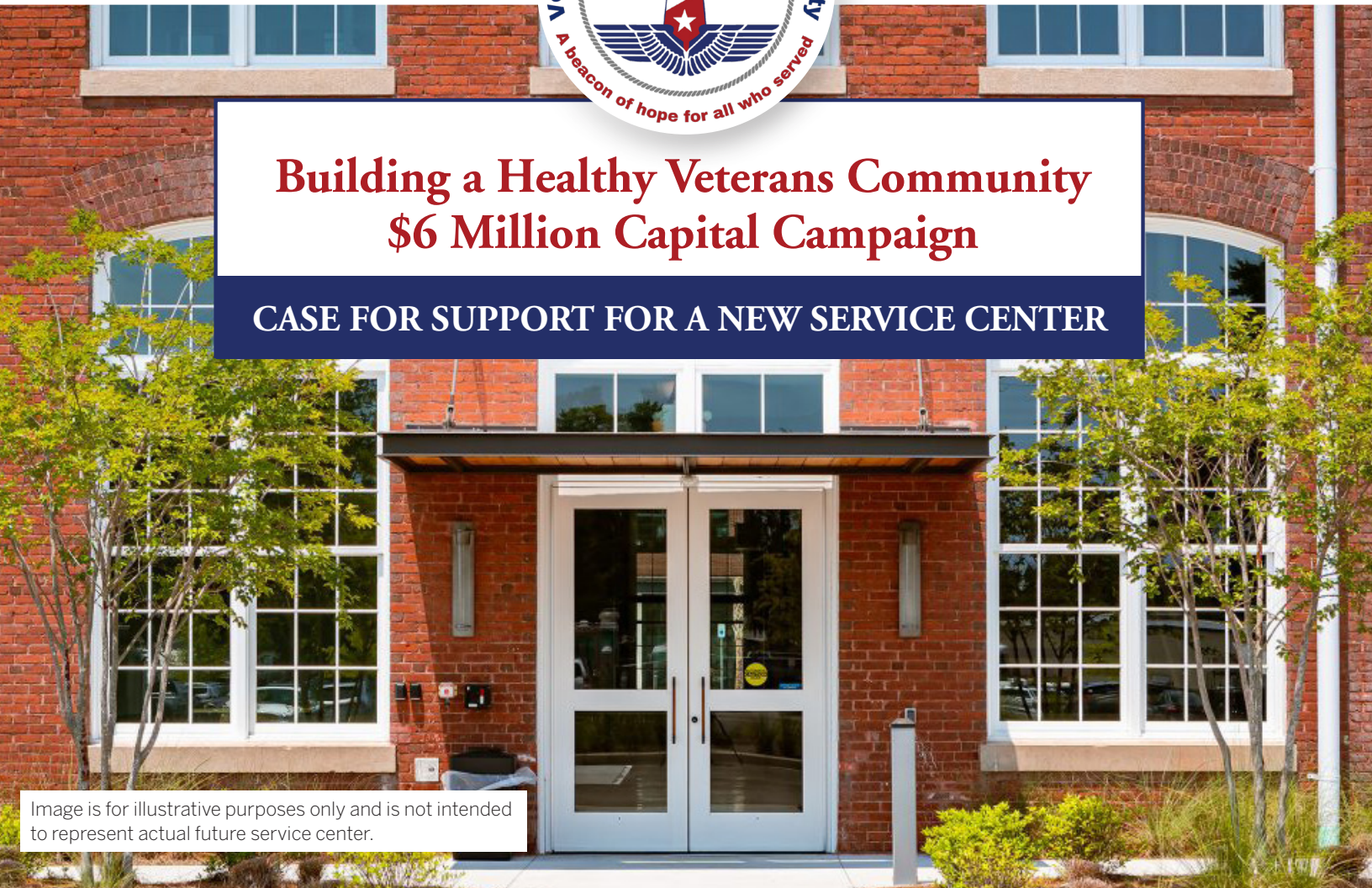


Image is for illustrative purposes only and is not intended to represent actual future service center.



# The Veterans Association of Bristol County (VABC) was founded in 1987 by Vietnam veterans to fill a substantial void in human services for local veterans and active members of the United States Armed Forces.

## As a small and flexible nonprofit

collaborating with numerous community partners, VABC maximizes its resources and experience serving veterans. With a mission to provide meaningful and compassionate support to veterans and their families, VABC ensures a higher and healthier quality of life for Bristol County veterans.

Hunger, homelessness, addiction, financial duress, and medical and mental health challenges affect a significant number of the

25,000 veterans (U.S. Census, 2023) who reside in this region. Nearly 10% of this vulnerable population are disabled and live at or below the poverty line. Most veterans in dire need of essential human and health services remain hard to reach.

Fortunately, VABC is a trusted and recognized resource. This reputation fuels a significant reliance for services and programs delivered from a modest and outdated City of Fall River-owned building located at 755 Pine Street.

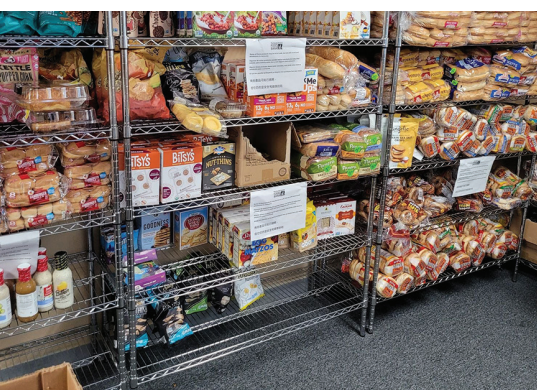
*“Each month, the assistance with food makes an immense difference for my family. It ensures that we have enough to get through the month without worrying about going hungry. Their support means we can focus on other essential needs, knowing that there’s a meal on the table, bringing us comfort and relief during challenging times.”*

— M.B., Veteran

## SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- ❖ VABC distributes 20,000 pounds of food per month to over 500 veterans and their families. Lunch is prepared and served daily while a monthly food pantry operates at capacity. VABC maintains a rescue food room to help relieve urgent nutritional deficits.
- ❖ VABC operates a clothing center to distribute essential, quality clothing and shoes. The clothing center maintains a store-like shopping experience to ensure a dignified experience and rotates its inventory seasonally.
- ❖ Recognized statewide for its effectiveness, the SHEROES program honors and engages women veterans in fellowship including workshops, activities and speaking programs.
- ❖ Weekly programs include Peer Support Groups and Coffee Socials to promote camaraderie and friendship for veterans combatting isolation and mental health challenges.
- ❖ Physical and mental wellness programs include painting, kayaking, hiking, biking, and stress management sessions. Rhythms of Service is a music therapy program.

VABC actively solicits recommendations from veterans to develop new services and activities that improve the quality of life of veterans.





## DEMAND ON THE RISE

VABC rigorously collects, analyzes and reports service data. To facilitate this best practice, veterans sign in through a customized computer kiosk to select the services to receive on that day. Captured information is readily available for internal assessment and reporting. This system was installed in July 2023 with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans Services.

Due to rising demand, VABC operates at capacity with consistent overcrowding within its current facilities. This has created severe operational constraints and an evident need for a larger facility to fulfill this vital mission.

## SERVICE TREND

	2022	2023	2024
Households Served	3,932	4,479	4,897
Units of Service	10,898*	10,943*	30,018**
New Veterans	134	234	415

\* Hand Counted

\*\* Data Collection System

## CURRENT CONDITIONS THAT LIMIT IMPACT

- ❖ Limited parking spaces and minimal street parking creating dangerous conditions for people and vehicles.
- ❖ No loading dock to accept large quantities of food pantry goods from the Greater Boston Food Bank and other suppliers. Volunteers are relied upon to handle goods at risk of injury.
- ❖ Lack of appropriate storage space for food supplies prompting some supplies to be turned away.
- ❖ An outdated and overcrowded kitchen inhibits the ability to meet demands for prepared nutritious meals.
- ❖ Ineffective heating and cooling system creates an uncomfortable environment for veterans, staff and volunteers.
- ❖ No private spaces to accommodate individual counseling and peer meetings.
- ❖ No on-site opportunity to build an addition or manage transitional and permanent housing.

## STRATEGIC GOAL

VABC is prepared to transition to a higher level of service with a more versatile and larger building. In 2024, VABC initiated a property search for a permanent home in preparation for its 40th anniversary in 2027.

To achieve this strategic goal, VABC has launched a \$6 million capital campaign; “Building a Healthy Veterans Community in Bristol County” to fund the acquisition and remodel of a new Service Center.





## THE OUTCOMES OF THIS TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT INCLUDE:

- ❖ **Increase operational footprint** by 400% with 50,000+ square feet of program space
- ❖ **Increase prepared meals** and rescue food service by 100% to 1,000 units per month
- ❖ **Increase food pantry donations** by 250% to 50,000 pounds per month
- ❖ **Expand the number of households serviced** by 50% to 7,500 households annually
- ❖ **Expand group programming** to include culinary arts training, career training, financial literacy, addiction recovery meetings, health and wellness classes, music, and more
- ❖ **Expand private services** to include intake and referrals, mental health counseling and clinical services, and drop-in services with third-party health professionals
- ❖ **Expand collaborations** and host events for veterans and the community at large
- ❖ **Improve the physical and mental health and quality of life** of more vulnerable veterans
- ❖ **Provide new housing opportunities** for homeless and vulnerable veterans
- ❖ **Assist an overburdened network** of health and human service providers, food pantries and others by increasing service to more veterans
- ❖ **Relocate the Disabled American Veterans** (DAV) Chapter 9 William S. Green, with a membership of nearly 600 veterans, and other veterans organizations to create a community hub

VABC welcomes your support of this objective to secure a service center and meet the goal of its **“Building a Healthy Veterans Community” Capital Campaign.**

For a tour of VABC and an overview of the urgent needs of veterans in our community, please contact  
Ken Levesque at **508-679-9277** or **k.levesque@thevabc.org**  
or Kolby Driscoll at **kolby@vantageinphilanthropy.com**

*Thank you.*



**Veterans Association of Bristol County - VABC**

755 Pine St, Fall River, MA 02720

508.679.9277 **thevabc.org**

