

We have provided this sample application in order to give you tips for a strong application. Questions and their answers are in BLUE. Some guidance you'll find on the application form is in RED. We have included tips for strong applications in GREEN.

GENERAL TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION:

If you're including links, test that they work and no special log-in or permissions are required to view the pages.

Have someone who doesn't know much about your program or project read your application before you submit it and give you feedback. Your application will be reviewed by community members who have no knowledge of what your organization does, so the best way to see if you are clearly communicating your objectives and information is to have outside eyes have a look before submitting your application!

Our application is designed for people who may never have written a grant application before. Read the questions carefully and answer them as directly as possible. This application generally takes between 1-2 hours to complete. Consider starting a document with your answers before you begin the online application. Gather your information in advance to make the application process easier!

Thank you for your service to veterans and good luck with your application.

SECTION ONE: ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

We particularly want to encourage grassroots, community-based, constituent-led organizations, but we also consider programs from local chapters of national organizations.

Legal Name of Organization: [RIVER RUN VETERANS DRAGON BOAT, INC.](#)

Also known as/doing business as Name of Organization: You may provide another name your organization uses (for example: the legal name of your organization may be the Smithfield Veterans Relief Organization, Inc., but it may be commonly known or do business as Smithfield Vets)

[RIVER RUN PARADragONS](#)

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: If your organization's legal name on file with the IRS or Secretary of State differs from the name you currently use, please be sure to put the name you currently use in the "Also Known As" field!

CONTACT PERSON

This person should be familiar with the project or program proposal.

First Name: [Jane](#) *Last Name:* [Doe](#)

Job Title or Role: [Volunteer Executive Director](#)

Phone Number: [555.555.5055](#) *Email:* JaneDoe@riverrundragons.org

ORGANIZATION ADDRESS & KEY INFO

Street Address: [665 N River St](#)

City: [Everyville](#) State [GA](#) ZIP: [55555](#)
Phone: [555.555.5055](#) Website: [www.RiverRunDragons.org](#)

Organization's EIN (IRS Tax ID): [81-9995555](#)

Year Founded: [2017](#)

Organization's Annual Revenue (pick one):

<\$50,000 \$50,000-100,000 \$100,000-\$250,000 \$250,000-\$500,000

Organizations with annual revenue greater than \$500,000 are not eligible to apply for this grant. If your organization's last 990 return shows revenue greater than \$500,000 in line 12, your application will be disqualified.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: If your organization's annual gross revenue is over \$500,000, your application will not be accepted. Please check line 12 (revenue) of your most recent 990 before proceeding!

- [Check here if you are a local chapter of a national nonprofit organization.](#)
- [Check here if your organization has received an American-Made Heroes Foundation Fund grant in the past.](#)

ORGANIZATION'S DOCUMENTS

Please upload or share links to files for three documents. If you choose to share links, you can use a free service such as Dropbox (how to video), Google Drive (how to video), or Jumpshare. If your organization has these files posted on the organization's website, you may use a direct link to each document on your website. **Please double-check that the links you send will allow anyone with the link to view the file!**

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Uploads or links to three files are needed for this next section. We need to know that 1) the IRS has approved 501(c)(3) status for your organization, 2) your organization is in good standing with your State, and 3) we need to see your organization's overall budget for ALL programs. You will have a chance later in the application to provide a budget for the specific project or program that this grant would help fund.

If providing a link to a document online, please double check to make sure that permissions are set so that anyone can view the content if they follow the link!

PART A: DOCUMENTS THAT SHOW TAX-EXEMPT STATUS AND YOUR ORGANIZATION'S REGISTRATION WITH YOUR STATE

Please upload or provide a link to **EACH** of the following:

1. FEDERAL PROOF OF TAX-EXEMPT STATUS:

PDF or image of IRS determination letter showing organization's 501(c)(3) status OR a link to an online copy of the IRS determination letter. **Please make sure the organization's name on the IRS determination letter matches the "Legal Name" you provided in Section 1. Religious**

organizations which have not applied for an IRS determination letter may upload a copy of EIN Confirmation Letter (CP 575) or EIN Verification Letter (147C) instead.

2. STATE PROOF OF ORGANIZATION'S REGISTRATION AND STATUS:

PDF or image showing that your organization is in good standing with your state's Secretary of State, or a copy of a Certificate of Good Standing. Please provide a copy of the screen shot from the Business Search on the Secretary of State's website showing an ACTIVE status OR other evidence of authority to conduct business in your State. If you recently renewed your ACTIVE status and your organization's record on the Secretary of State's website is not updated, you may provide a screenshot of the payment/transaction to establish or renew ACTIVE status.

PART B: DOCUMENT SHOWING THE ORGANIZATION'S OVERALL INCOME/EXPENSES

Please upload or provide a link to **ONE** of the following:

3A. For organizations that have filed a 990-EZ or 990, please provide your most recently filed 990-EZ or 990.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Organizations who filed a 990-EZ or "regular" form 990 MUST upload a copy of the 990-EZ or 990. **990-Ns are NOT accepted!**

Form **990-N**
Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Electronic Notice (e-Postcard)
for Tax-Exempt Organizations not Required To File Form
990 or 990-EZ

Does your 990 look like this at the top? If so, it's a 990-N – do NOT upload it in section 3A, but proceed to 3B and upload a budget for your current operating year instead!

OR

3B. For organizations that have filed a 990-N (postcard 990) or who are new and have not yet filed a 990-EZ or 990, please provide the organization's budget for your current operating year. Budgets should clearly show projected income sources as well as projected expenses (including staffing, fundraising, administrative, and program expenses). If you need help drafting an organizational budget or a budget template, [see this article for help](#).

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Organizations with budgets under \$50,000 who filed a 990-N MUST upload a copy of their budget instead of a 990! Organizations that have just incorporated MUST upload a copy of their budget. Make your budget easy to read and include both INCOME and EXPENSES. Someone not familiar with your organization should be able to look at your budget and easily see

- 1) how money is spent on ALL of your programs, services, administration, fundraising, and
- 2) the various sources of ALL income and types of income that fund your organization.

SECTION TWO: ABOUT THE PROJECT OR PROGRAM

We are open to a variety of projects that help veterans including, but not limited to, initiatives in education, employment, the arts, recreation, housing, health, and human needs. Each project makes a meaningful difference in the lives of veterans and improves the enjoyment and quality of life for veterans. We look for programs and projects that embody Evan Williams' brand values: hard-working, humbly confident, reliable, and imbued with American spirit. We do not fund programs and projects that serve people under the age of 21 or addiction/recovery related programs.

PROJECT CATEGORY (PICK ONE): *If your project addresses multiple categories, please pick the category where your project will make the largest difference in the lives of veterans.*

- Basic human needs (housing, food, clothing, etc.)*
- Career and education assistance*
- Community and recreational activities (any group activities or trips, sporting activities, music, theater, and the arts)*
- Health and well-being (physical and mental healthcare services, personal protective equipment, assistance with disabilities)*
- Supporting equity and inclusion (service to historically marginalized communities, financial counseling for economically disadvantaged individuals, inclusive leadership/mentoring, etc.)*

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS:

Having a program that serves youth or provides addiction/recovery services does not disqualify your organization from applying. However, no funds received through this grant can be used to support services to those under 21 or to fund addiction/recovery services.

- I certify that any funding received from the American-Made Heroes Foundation Fund will NOT be used to serve people under the age of 21 or for addiction/recovery related programs.*

PROJECT TITLE: *Provide a short title for the project you'd like us to help fund. Choose a name that easily identifies how you're serving U.S. military veterans and that will distinguish it from any other projects.*

Project title (up to 10 words in the space that follows):

RIVER RUN VETERANS PARADRAGON RACING TEAM

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Make your project's title distinct and specific to your organization. Avoid acronyms or, if your project is known by an acronym, spell out what the acronym means. A good title should say—at a glance—what the program's about.

EXAMPLE OF A WEAKER PROJECT TITLE: "HEAR"

EXAMPLE OF A STRONGER PROJECT TITLE: DAV Georgia's "Heating, Emergency Assistance, Rental" (HEAR) Program

PROJECT OVERVIEW: *Please provide a very brief description of the project American-Made Hero Foundation Funds will support. You will have the opportunity to tell us the details of your project in the next series of questions.*

Project overview statement (up to 50 words in the space that follows):

Improve differently-abled veterans' health through paradragon dragon boat training and racing. Dragon boating is not an individual sport; success hinges on 22 people working together in sync. This makes it a welcoming sport for those of varying abilities. Paradrasons have physical or mental impairments yet compete alongside able-bodied crews.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: The overview should give the “big picture” idea of the project you’re asking us to fund. Imagine these words being used in a press release or a sound-bite. If you use terms that might be unfamiliar to the general public—as our sample applicant does—explain the terms in the overview or when answering one of the follow-up questions. Here, the applicant has used the term “paradragon” and then immediately helped the grant reviewers know what that term means.

Reviewers will be looking for an overview that 1) clearly says what your organization wants to do and 2) shows a strong focus on improving the lives of veterans.

PROJECT IMPACT: This section asks detailed questions about your project or program. Your answers will be reviewed by the grant review team and scored using a standardized scoring rubric.

You may answer the next five questions in written format or, if you are more comfortable answering them in a video format, you may do so by checking the "video format" option, and uploading your video.

If you choose to submit a video, please do not provide a “generic” video about your organization. Your video should address the next five questions in the same order, and should be between four and five minutes long. Your presentation must be in English or, if in another language, it must be subtitled in English. Your video must not contain images of individuals under the age of 21. This does not need to be a professionally produced video, and you may record it on a phone or computer and upload it here.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Not everyone likes to write! If you’re more comfortable doing so, consider submitting the answers to the next five questions through video. Videos don’t need to be fancy! They *do* need to answer the same questions in the same order. Keep your answers specific and on-point. Keep your videos to 4-5 minutes. You will have a chance to submit promotional videos and other materials about your organization or program later in this application.

VIDEO FORMAT

WRITTEN FORMAT

1. **What need or problem facing veterans does your project or program address? Please include a plain statement of the problem that exists or the challenge veterans are facing. Provide evidence that this is a problem for the veteran community. You will tell us how your project or program will help meet veterans’ needs in the next question. (up to 100 words in the space that follows)**

Roughly 30% of 12 million veterans report having a disability. Veterans with physical, psychological, neurological, or sensory impairments face barriers in employment, housing, and reintegration, and may also struggle with anxiety, substance abuse, and thoughts of suicide.

Studies show veterans with disability/impairment feel GREATER isolation, anxiety, and depression and have LOWER physical activity than non-impaired veterans. As a program participant said: "I isolated from everyone. I didn't feel anyone understood what I was going through. My body couldn't do things I used to do. The more I didn't get out, the worse things got in my head and my body."

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Reviewers will be looking for 1) a clear statement of the problem or need, 2) evidence that shows this is a problem in the veteran community, and 3) a sense that this need is significant, critical, or timely.

Evidence can come from statistics or you can help the reviewers "feel" the problem by relating a compelling story about or quote from an individual who illustrates the need faced by many veterans. This applicant has chosen to do both, by providing some statistics and sharing a quote about how a program participant felt.

- 2. *How will your program or project help meet this need or solve this problem, and how will you get it done? Please be specific about what this project will do and how you'll make the project happen. You may wish to include details of "who, what, where and when". (up to 200 words in the space that follows)***

Dragon boating involves 20 participants paddling together, each contributing her/his personal best to a team effort based on sync/technique and not on any individual's fitness/athleticism.

Our Paradrasons experience physical, psychological, neurological, or sensory impairments. We use simple adaptive systems to accommodate those with amputations, spinal-cord injuries, and visual impairment. Current participants range from age 21-81.

We offer six weekly 90-minute training sessions (May-October) on the Broad River in our two 40' long dragon boats. Our teams travel to 3-5 competitions/races each year. Participants can train for leadership roles (steers, coaches, or captains). Our programs are 100% volunteer-led by trained veteran participants. There's no charge--equipment, training, and race entry fees are provided.

Our program improves physical, social, and emotional health. Dragon boating provides a "new unit", offering camaraderie, concentrated training focus, and community that participants once had in the military. The emotional/social benefits associated with the community that forms are remarkable. Participants sit side-by-side in a boat for 90-minutes and frequent rest-times during training allow participants to let their guard down and open up to their seatmates. "Real talk" happens. Community forms. Teammates look out for one another, getting together outside of practice and encouraging one another throughout the week.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: A strong answer is thorough, provides details (who, what, where, when), and is realistic and well thought-out.

Reviewers will assess 1) whether the actions/activities of the program are well-defined, 2) if the need described in the first question is at the center of the project's activities/goals, and 3) that the proposal clearly outlines a plan to implement the project successfully.

3. **How will you know you've made a difference and how will veterans' lives improve as a direct result of your project or program?** Describe how your project will lead to sustained improvement in or have a positive impact on the lives of veterans. Tell us how you measure success. (up to 75 words in the space that follows)

Participants complete anonymous surveys at the start and end of each season, including questions about anxiety, depression, general health, social contact, thoughts of suicide.

In 2021, 120 first-year participants reported an average:

- 50% increase in physical fitness,
- 75% increase in social/emotional connection,
- 78% decrease in stress, anxiety, depression, isolation,
- 80% decrease in thoughts of suicide.

Additionally, returning participants showed sustained positive improvements in physical fitness, mental health, and social connection in start and end-of-season surveys.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: A strong answer is thorough, provides details of how success will be measured, and is realistic and well thought-out.

There are many ways to measure a project's success, such as pre/post program tests or surveys, participation/attendance records, follow-up interviews, questionnaires, feedback forms, percentage of participants achieving a goal after the program such as a job or housing, testimonials. Pick a method of measuring success that best relates to your project and the people you're serving.

Reviewers will assess 1) whether the project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the lives of veterans and 2) that you've provided a clear explanation of how the outcomes of the project will be assessed or evaluated.

4. **Tell us a bit about your organization's past success in providing services to veterans.** You may also wish to share how your organization involves veterans in leadership, planning, and/or service delivery. (up to 75 words in the space that follows)

Since 2017, River Run has provided dragon boats, equipment, and training for veterans. We provide between 5,000 and 7,000 total individual hours of on-water training/racing time each year. On average, we welcome 150 new participants each year and 250 returning veteran paddlers. Our current Board, Steering Committees, Coaches, Mentors, and Steerspeople are all veteran paddlers who became dragon-boaters through our program. Our Coaches and Steers complete national certification programs with US Dragon Boat Federation.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: A strong answer proves the organization has a history or the ability to both reach and serve veterans. A strong answer may also show that veterans help lead the organization or provide services to other veterans.

Reviewers will look for 1) strong evidence of organizational expertise, experience, or the capacity to reach veterans, and 2) how the organization includes veterans in leadership, planning, or service delivery.

5. *Tell us how this project or your organization addresses issues of diversity, equity, and/or inclusion. Diversity, inclusion, and equity mean different things to different organizations in different parts of the country. (up to 100 words in the space that follows)*

Dragon boating is noted for its welcoming attitude. By providing equipment and training, we decrease barriers to access that have historically discouraged or prevented marginalized community members and communities of color from participating in paddle sports. We are consciously inclusive, committed to removing barriers so disabled/impaired veterans can pursue paddling education, leadership development, competition, and/or instructor certification. Participants and leaders are 60% men/40% women and range in age from 21-80+ years. Our leadership and participants' ethnic/racial diversity mirrors our community's demographics. Our Outreach Committee tables 15+ community events each year to invite veterans of all backgrounds to paddle with us.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: A strong answer shows the organization is thinking about how it offers services to people of varying backgrounds based on local conditions and the types of services it provides.

A DIVERSE organization may include and provide services to people with a variety of life experiences and backgrounds. An EQUITABLE organization may provide fair and inclusive access to resources or work to serve historically excluded or disadvantaged people. An INCLUSIVE organization may actively seek diverse perspectives or voices to participate in leadership, planning, service-delivery, or decision making.

Reviewers will assess whether the organization is meaningfully addressing diversity, equity, or inclusion in its planning and service delivery.

You are welcome to share up to three links to supporting materials such as the organization's Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter accounts, or an annual report highlighting your work on behalf of veterans. This is optional. Please provide a brief description of what you're sharing followed by a URL link.

1. Description: YouTube video showing our 2021 program accomplishments with participant testimonials

Link: www.youtube.com/xxxxxx

2. Description: Interview with a visually impaired veteran about how dragon boating improved her mental and physical health

Link: www.RiverRun.org/LisaStory

3. Description: Newspaper article highlighting River Run paddler Jim Reason's selection as the first amputee paddler on the US National Dragon Boat Team

Link: www.cjournal.com/xxxxxx

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: If you choose to include supporting materials, make sure the links work (the links we've provided above don't work, by the way!).

Reviewers will look for 1) evidence that the organization is active and engaged with the community, and 2) that the organization provides strong service to the veteran community.

PROJECT BUDGET:

The next questions will help you show us:

- The overall EXPENSES for the program or project
- The overall FUNDING SOURCES for your program and who is supporting this program

PROJECT EXPENSES

- **List your anticipated expenses for the specific project described in Section 2, followed by the amount you expect to spend in each area for this specific project.** Your total project budget will auto-calculate at the bottom as you add items. Be **specific** when describing your project’s needs. These needs might be for staff, materials, food, equipment, transportation, supplies, training, travel, or other items or services.

EXAMPLE PROJECT NEED	AMOUNT
<i>Salaries & wages: 10 hours of Executive Director’s time coordinating project</i>	\$200.00
<i>Equipment purchase: adaptive seats</i>	\$3,000.00
<i>Supplies for project including handouts, equipment rental, registration tables</i>	\$2,000.00
<i>Food for three events for 100 attendees and volunteers at each event</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Transportation assistance for up to 30 veterans during project</i>	\$500.00
<i>Trainer stipends for three events</i>	\$1,500.00
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES:	\$8,200.00

YOUR PROJECT’S NEED (be specific!)	AMOUNT
<i>US Dragon Boat Certification training for five new volunteer coaches (\$225 each) to expand our new member mentorship program</i>	\$1,125.00
<i>US Dragon Boat Certification training for three new steerspeople (\$300 each) to insure that we can offer six on-water practices with two boats each week May-Oct</i>	\$900.00
<i>ZenPlanner scheduling software fees to allow participants to book training sessions and complete paperwork online</i>	\$1,680.00
<i>General liability insurance for participants</i>	\$2,400.00
<i>500 team t-shirts</i>	\$5,175.00
<i>Start of season and end of season kick-off events, including food & space use</i>	\$2,000.00
<i>Race entry fees for five Paradrageon teams at four national races</i>	\$20,000.00
YOUR PROJECT’S TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$33,280.00

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: REMEMBER: this budget section is about the SPECIFIC project you’ve described in Section 1!

The more specific you are when describing the need, the more it helps reviewers understand what your program will do. Think through all elements of your project and describe the entire program’s budget. Make sure that your expenses tie back to the goals and activities described in the project impact statement in Section 1.

Reviewers will evaluate whether 1) the proposed budget is realistic and appears cost-effective and 2) that the budget links specifically to the activities and outcomes you described in the project impact section.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE PROJECT

- **Show how you will fund your program.** Please show us the “big picture” of how the Expense Budget above will be funded. Our average grant size is \$5,000 and you may use this figure as one of your funding sources. The total funding budget will auto-calculate at the bottom as you add funding sources. Your expense and funding source amount totals should be the same. **For each funding source, please indicate whether the funds are secured or not yet secured.** Be specific when telling us who is supporting this project or program.

EXAMPLE FUNDING SOURCES	Indicate status	AMOUNT
<i>American-Made Heroes Foundation Fund</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$5,000.00
<i>In-kind donations of food from VOA Community Kitchen</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$700.00
<i>Event sponsor: Bass Pro Shops</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$500.00
<i>Donation from TARC for transportation assistance</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$500.00
<i>Special event fundraiser</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$1,000.00
<i>Grant from Healthy Hometown Foundation</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$500.00
TOTAL PROJECT INCOME/FUNDING:		\$8,200.00

YOUR PROJECT'S FUNDING SOURCES	Indicate status	AMOUNT
<i>American-Made Heroes Foundation Fund</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$5,000.00
<i>Grant from Mayor's Office of Diversity and Equity</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$20,000.00
<i>Corporate charitable support from Humana for t-shirt production</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$5,000.00
<i>Individual donations through our annual online auction of donated items</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applied for, not yet secured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funds secured or pledged	\$3,280.00
YOUR PROJECT'S TOTAL INCOME/FUNDING		\$33,280

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Your total funding/income should equal the total expenses. Think through how you will fund the overall project and be as specific as possible when listing how you'll

secure funding to meet the project's needs. "Fundraising" is a vague answer; "2023 T-shirt sales" is a specific answer.

Reviewers will look for evidence of 1) a diverse income stream in support of your project or program and 2) if additional funding is needed, you have a clear plan for funding or fundraising.

PROJECT SCOPE:

How many veterans will your project or program serve or benefit? If this is a multi-year project, please tell us how many people will be served through this project in one year. (up to 10 words in the space that follows)

500 disabled/impaired veterans

PROJECT STAFFING:

Every project needs people involved to make it happen. In order to help us understand how this project or program will be supported, please choose the statement that most closely applies to the budget you've outlined:

- 100% PAID STAFF: Paid staff or subcontractors will support the program or project.
- 100% VOLUNTEER STAFF: This program or project will be staffed by unpaid volunteers.
- A MIX OF PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFFING: A mix of paid staff/subcontractors and unpaid volunteers will support this program or project.

Please estimate how many total hours of volunteer and/or staff time will be needed to support your project or program. (up to 10 words in the space that follows)

900 hrs: 624 on-water + 300 planning hours

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: The questions about scope and staffing help the reviewers get a better idea of how many veterans will be served by the project and how the project will be supported.

Having reviewed your project, reviewers will answer a set of questions about 1) what sort of lasting impact this project might have on the lives of veterans, 2) whether the proposed budget is in line with the number of people who would benefit from the project or the lasting impact the program might have for participants, and 3) whether there appears to be realistic, strong staffing support for the project.

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE VETERAN LEADER ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION

Each applicant organization **must** submit information about a U.S. military veteran who is involved with or supports your organization. Each year, Evan Williams celebrates being American-made and owned with the release of limited-edition American Hero bottles and by recognizing a diverse group of U.S. military veterans named Evan Williams American-Made Heroes. These American-Made Heroes exemplify what it means to serve and continue to give back to their community through involvement with nonprofits serving veterans.

Please confirm the veteran associated with this project or program is over the age of 21.

The veteran associated with this project or program agrees to be featured in marketing materials related to the American-Made Hero program: *Yes* *No*

VETERAN'S INFORMATION

First Name: Rebecca

Last Name: Jules

Street Address: 990 S Firth Ave

City: Evans

State: GA

ZIP: 99999

Email: paddlepower99@iglou.com

Phone number: 555.555.5955

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): 12/28/1981

In what branch of the military did Veteran serve? Marine Corps

What was Veteran's last rank held? Gunnery Sergeant

What was Veteran's last position held? Radio Data Team Lead

Gender Identity:

Female

Male

A gender not listed

Prefer to self-describe: _____

Prefer not to say

Demographic data:

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

White

Some other race, ethnicity, or origin

Prefer to self-describe: _____

Prefer not to say

Ethnicity: Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or of Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin*
- Yes, of Hispanic, Latin/a/x, or Spanish-origin*
- Prefer to self-describe: _____*
- Prefer not to say*

How did this veteran’s military service and experiences affect their life? We’d like to get a sense of who this veteran is. Feel free to tell us about their service history and how their military service changed their lives or inspired them to give back to their community. (up to 350 words in the space that follows)

Gunnery Sergeant Rebecca Jules enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2001. Upon graduation from Marine Combat Training and the Field Radio operator course, she served as a Field Radio Operator and completed two deployments to Iraq where she was promoted to Lance Corporal, Corporal, and Sergeant. Further orders took her to back to Iraq attached to a Regimental Combat Team. In 2008, Sgt. Jules was promoted to Staff Sergeant and completed the Career Course; in 2009, she was assigned to the Advanced Instruction Group at the Officers Communications School. In 2013, she received orders to the Wounded Warrior Regiment in Quantico where she coordinated and assisted with the management of transitions, rehabilitation services, and helped develop and produce reporting procedures for suicide attempts and ideations throughout the Marine Corps. She also conducted case management and outreach to active duty, reserve, and separated Marines who had been wounded, ill, or injured. During this time, she was promoted to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant. She received orders in 2015 that took her to Okinawa Japan, where she was introduced to dragon boating. While attached to a Communications Battalion in Okinawa, she led off-island exercises to install communications infrastructures. During one of these exercises, she was involved in a vehicular accident that led to amputation of her left arm. In Rebecca’s own words: “My time in the Marine Corps taught me the value of working together in daunting circumstances. When I was attached to the Wounded Warrior Regiment, I saw how important a sense of belonging was for Marines who had life-changing injuries. My time in Okinawa introduced me to dragon boating, where the winners are not the strongest individuals, but the team that stays in sync, that acts as one. When I went through my own life-changing injury and its fall-out, the habits of team-work I first developed in the Marine Corps plus my experience with dragon boating worked first to help ME back to health and then allowed me to encourage, support, and inspire others.”

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Reviewers will be looking to learn more about the veteran’s service and how it changed their life or their outlooks. Information that is compelling, unique, interesting, or inspiring should be shared.

What is the veteran’s relationship to your organization and how long has the veteran been involved with your organization? They may have started the nonprofit, be a staff member, committed volunteer, or board member. They may also be a community member who has reached out to partner with a nonprofit to serve the shared community. (up to 75 words in the space that follows)

Rebecca began paddling with River Run in 2019. Since then, she has completed her USDBF Level 1 and Level 2 Coaching Certification and serves this year as Chair of our Outreach Committee, coordinating tabling at local events and reaching out to rehab centers to invite impaired veterans to try our program. An amputee, Rebecca paddles with an adaptive one-arm paddle and has been crucial in recruiting other amputees to our program.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Reviewers will be looking for evidence that the veteran is clearly active in the organization as a leader or volunteer, and has depth to their involvement (length of time and/or types of activities).

Why is this particular project or program important to this veteran? Help us understand why the veteran cares about this project!(up to 150 words in the space that follows)

Rebecca says: “You don’t need legs to participate; you don’t need two arms either! You don’t need athletic ability! It’s all about working together. The #1 reason I do this is for my mental health. After my amputation, I was depressed. Mark, who founded River Run, met me at a doctor’s office and encouraged me to try dragon boating again. I had enjoyed dragon boating during my time in Okinawa, but never imagined I could paddle after I lost my arm. The mentorship program helped me make new friends who helped me adjust. They got me out of a dark place. Dragon boating is about being in sync with others. I met people who were positive and my attitude shifted to match theirs. Paddling strengthened my shoulders and improved my mobility/balance. I feel whole again. I joined the Board because I want others to feel what I felt: hope and belonging.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Reviewers will be looking to understand why this veteran is involved in the project, that she or he really cares about the project, and that his or her personal story is compelling.

What is remarkable about this veteran? What is it about this veteran that makes you want to nominate them to be an American-Made Hero? Please tell us something that’s unique or special about this veteran that makes them stand out in your eyes. Whether it’s an award or recognition they received, a life circumstance they’ve overcome, an interesting project they’ve started, or special skills or talents they have—help us get to know the veteran. (up to 150 words in the space that follows)

Rebecca has received multiple awards. Her military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. She’s also earned gold medals in regional dragon boat competitions. What makes Rebecca amazing to us is how she took our outreach program to the next level. Rebecca has designed a thoughtful outreach program that has increased our participation rate by 68% over the last two years. Rebecca’s military service experience and her own injury give her deep insight into the mental health challenges so many veterans face and that insight shows in how she engages with others. She is a natural, inspired, and inspiring public speaker. Her caring and courage are contagious. She has helped us design ways to measure our community engagement and paddler retention. Her work ethic and professional leadership style inspire all of us!

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: Reviewers will use this section to deepen their understanding of the veteran. Don’t be afraid to “brag” about why the veteran is special—whether it’s because of what they’ve achieved or why your organization values them!

We love learning more about veterans who give back to their communities! You are welcome to share up to three links to additional information about the veteran, such as the veteran's website, a news story about her/his work with your organization, or a video or photo. This is optional. Please provide a brief description of what you're sharing followed by a URL link.

1. [Description: Interview with Rebecca talking about adaptive paddling for amputees](#)

[Link: www.adaptions.xyz/Rebecca](http://www.adaptions.xyz/Rebecca)

2. [Description: Newsletter article Rebecca wrote about her journey from being a non-athlete to a winning Paradrage athlete](#)

[Link: www.riverrun.org/mar2020newsletter](http://www.riverrun.org/mar2020newsletter)

3. [Description: Rebecca's "Coach's Corner" area of our website where she shares weekly tips and inspiration about dragon boating](#)

[Link: www.riverrun.org/CoachBecCorner](http://www.riverrun.org/CoachBecCorner)

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION: If you choose to include supporting materials, make sure the links work (the links we've provided above don't work, by the way!).

Reviewers will look for 1) evidence that the veteran is giving back to the community, and 2) compelling or interesting materials that show how this veteran would be inspiring to others.