



2024

The Independence Fund Impact Report





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A Note from our CEO

Dear Friends,

Every day at The Independence Fund, we see firsthand the immense challenges faced by our Veterans, their Caregivers, and our wartime allies. These incredible individuals, whose lives have been forever changed by war, continue to show remarkable courage in the face of adversity.

While their journeys may be difficult, their stories are far from over—thanks to the work we're doing together at The Independence Fund and your unwavering support. Through our programs, we empower these heroes to write new chapters filled with hope and resilience, helping them reclaim their independence and create brighter futures.

In 2024, your generosity made an extraordinary impact. With your help, we provided life-saving retreats, cutting-edge all-terrain trackchairs, and countless opportunities for connection, mentorship, and camaraderie within the Veteran community. These programs are more than services—they're lifelines, built on the belief that no hero should feel alone in their struggles.

By investing in our nation's heroes, you're not only honoring their sacrifices but also helping them build lives filled with empowerment and gratitude. Together, we're making sure their futures are brighter and their sacrifices never forgotten.

Looking ahead to 2025, I'm filled with hope and excitement for what's to come. We have exciting plans to reach even more of our community and extend our support to more heroes. I can't wait to share this journey with you.

As the wife and caregiver of one of our nation's most severely wounded surviving service members, I bear witness daily to the quiet courage that surviving demands. A grateful nation, chartered by your support, has been the life saving difference for many. The mission continues.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Sarah Verardo



Impact by the Numbers

Program numbers are accurate as of December 20, 2024



11,095

Veterans supported through
Feeding Independence



2,147

Caregivers assisted
through retreats and
virtual events



2,685

All-terrain trackchairs
ordered



4,267

Cases served through
Casework



4,353

First Responders trained
through VJI



761

Operation Resilience
participants attended
retreats

3,488

Veterans and Caregivers
supported through
Independence@Home

2,145

Adaptive sports
grants given

314

Families
assisted

2,024

Veterans engaged
through TIF Tactical

Established in 2007, The Independence Fund is dedicated to serving the Warfighter Community. We offer programs and services aimed at fostering the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual independence of our servicemembers, combat Veterans, their Caregivers, families, and Allies who served in combat alongside them. Our initiatives encompass innovative mobility and adaptive technologies, suicide prevention, Caregiver and family support, and advocacy for Veterans with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, government agencies, legislators, and allied partners at federal and state levels.

Mobility Program

The Independence Fund's Mobility Program is dedicated to restoring independence and freedom to our nation's severely wounded, ill, and injured Veterans. We achieve this through our specialized all-terrain trackchairs, empowering Veterans to regain their mobility and independence. Engineered to navigate challenging terrain including, snow, mud, and dirt, these mobility devices enable Veterans to reenter the outdoors and engage in the activities they enjoy.



In 2024, The Independence Fund surpassed 2,685 all-terrain trackchairs gifted to Veterans across the nation.



"This chair is truly be life-changing for me and my family. It has granted me the freedom to fully enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, nature walks, and camping without worrying about the limitations or safety risks that come with a traditional wheelchair. Beyond that, it allows me to share precious moments with my kids—playing soccer, basketball, or tossing a football in the backyard—while staying active and involved in their lives."

- Veteran Raphael Harris

In 2025, The Independence Fund aims to surpass chair number 2,700! There are currently more than 15 Veterans on the waitlist to receive all-terrain trackchairs who can look forward to receiving their custom chair next year.

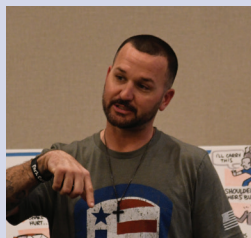
Operation Resilience

Operation Resilience (OpRes) is an innovative solution to address the critical issue of Veteran suicide by emphasizing the power of connectivity, peer support, and the rekindling of camaraderie forged in the crucible of combat. This initiative reunites post-9/11 military units that have shared traumatic experiences during deployment, acknowledging the profound impact of these events and the ensuing risk of Veteran suicide upon their return home. Drawing upon the deep bonds of brotherhood formed in the field, Operation Resilience focuses on the vital mission of suicide prevention through collaborative peer support, physical activities, and the cultivation of social connections to enhance coping mechanisms and accountability.

In 2024, The Independence Fund assisted more than 160 Veterans through Operation Resilience Retreats.



Testimonials



"I went into Operation Resilience with an open mind and not really having any expectations. I can honestly say that this trip saved quite a few lives, mine included."

Thomas Alderfer, Operation Resilience Participant



"I left the Army and lost all sense of community, wandered aimlessly, lost my world, and fell into a clear pattern of self-destructive behaviors and isolation. I am so glad that I bucked up and came to Operation Resilience. The Independence Fund saved lives during OpRes weekend and likely will save more."

Brian Giroux, Operation Resilience Participant

In 2025, The Independence Fund aims to host four OpRes retreats with the intention of serving more than 400 participants.



These events offer combat units a change to reconnect and build back the bonds forged on the battlefield. The generous support of donors and sponsors makes these experiences possible, directly impacting the lives of those who sacrifice so much.

Every dollar donated helps fund transformative events like OpRes for our warfighter community. The Operation Resilience program works to ensure that Veterans know they are not alone, and their vital work is seen, valued, and supported.



Veterans Justice Initiative

The Veterans Justice Initiative (VJI) is dedicated to supporting Veterans involved in the criminal justice system. VJI's three-pronged approach includes:



Training First Responders:

Equipping first responders to recognize and respond to Veterans' unique needs, reducing unnecessary arrests.

Case Management:

Equipping First Responders to recognize and respond to Veterans' unique needs, reducing unnecessary arrests.

Establishing Veterans Treatment Courts:

Collaborating with local jurisdictions to create specialized courts that prioritize rehabilitation and accountability.

By addressing the root causes of justice involvement and offering tailored support, VJI empowers Veterans to rebuild their lives and transition successfully back into their communities.

In 2024, VJI trained more than 1,800 First Responders, added three additional Veterans Treatment Courts in North Carolina, and completed more than 80 individual case inquiries from Veterans in crisis.

To date, VJI has trained 4,353 First Responders, added 6 Veteran Treatment Courts, and completed 278 cases.



VJI at the 2024 North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police Conference

In 2025, VJI will expand its reach to make a greater impact on Veterans involved in the criminal justice system. Key initiatives include:

Training North Carolina's Highway Patrol:

Equipping over 1,600 state troopers to recognize and respond to Veterans in crisis.

Expanding Veterans Treatment Courts:

Creating more specialized courts to provide Veterans with tailored support and rehabilitation.

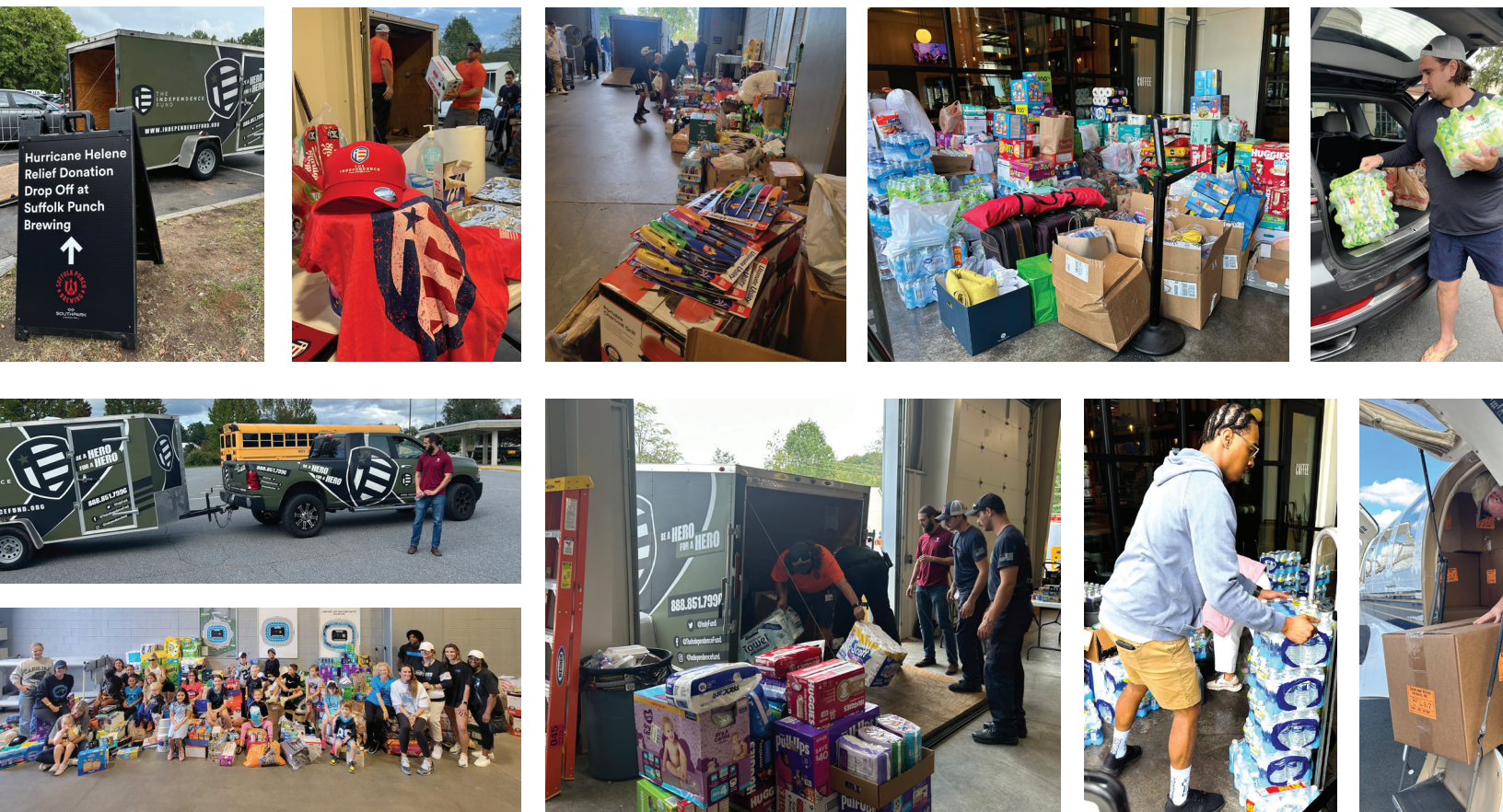
Enhanced Case Management:

Offering individualized support to Veterans throughout the legal process.

Partnering with Save Our Allies

Hurricane Helene struck Western North Carolina in late September 2024, leaving unprecedented flooding, destruction, and heartbreaking loss of life in its wake. Many residents, including Veterans and servicemembers, were left homeless and without basic necessities.

In response, The Independence Fund and Save Our Allies immediately took action. Since October 1, our partnership has delivered over **190,000** essential items and participated in life-saving search and rescue missions alongside SOA.



Our partnership with Save Our Allies, established in 2021, reflects a shared mission to support our nation's heroes, their families, and our wartime Allies.

As Western North Carolina rebuilds, we are inspired by the resilience of its people. Thank you to our partners and donors who stepped up to help North Carolina when it needed it most.



Caregiver & Family Support

Veteran Caregivers dedicate their lives to supporting our nation's catastrophically wounded, injured, and ill heroes. The Caregiver and Family program provides much-needed respite, connection, and resources to these Caregivers – who may not have support otherwise. Through retreats, community, and ongoing support, the program empowers Caregivers to thrive as individuals.

In 2024, The Caregiver and Family Program assisted more than 100 Caregivers through retreats and virtual events.

Words from Veteran Caregivers:



Ashley Louder
Caregiver to Army Veteran Mac Louder

"I truly do not know what life would look like without the support and encouragement of The Independence Fund and the donors who make their work possible. Thank you for staying in the fight with us."



Tiffany Vendela
Caregiver to Army Veteran Travis Vendela

"The reason I think The Independence Fund is important is because they understand the struggles we deal with and they recognize what is still needed."

In 2025, the Caregiver and Family Program will host impactful retreats and virtual Caregiver Connection events, expanding support for our nation's military caregivers.

These events offer Caregivers and families much-needed opportunities to recharge, connect with peers, and access resources that strengthen their ability to care for both their loved ones and themselves.

The generous support of donors and sponsors makes these experiences possible, directly impacting the lives of those who sacrifice so much.

Each donation helps fund transformative retreats and events that foster community and resiliency within military families. The Caregiver and Family program works to ensure that Caregivers know they are not alone, and they are supported by their peers and their country.



Sponsorship Opportunities

Looking to further your impact? There are many ways to make an even greater difference in the lives of American heroes. Discover our many sponsorship opportunities, today!

Mobility Program

Provide catastrophically wounded Veterans the chance to regain their independence with the help of specialized all-terrain trackchairs.

Trackchair Sponsor	\$26,000
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Operation Resilience

These powerful retreats foster mental health and wellness by reuniting military units who sustained casualties and post-combat suicide.

OpRes Champion	\$500,000
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(One full year of up to four Operation Resilience Programs)

Grand Title Sponsorship	\$150,000
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(One full Operation Resilience Program)

Includes the benefits from above for one Operation Resilience

Transportation and Activities Sponsor	\$50,000
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Welcome Dinner Sponsor	\$10,000
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Beyond the Call

Luncheon benefiting the Caregivers and the Veterans they care for each day.

Presenting Sponsor for our Beyond the Call Luncheon	\$10,000
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Sponsorships also available at the \$5,000 and \$2,500 levels

Wounded Heroes Day

Celebrate the official passage of House Bill 138/Senate Bill 132 that honors SGT Michael Verardo's Alive Day and all of North Carolina's Wounded Heroes.

Title Sponsor	\$50,000
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Reception Sponsor (two available)	\$25,000
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Supporting Sponsor (five available)	\$10,000
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Feeding Independence

Feeding Independence events provide Veterans with groceries and supplies through contact-less, drive thru events at local VA medical centers throughout the country.

Grand Sponsor for one year	\$150,000
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Sponsor one Feeding Independence	\$25,000
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There are wonderful benefits to each of these incredible sponsorship opportunities. Please contact the Development Team at Development@independencefund.org to learn more about how you can become a sponsor or call (888) 851-7996.

How To Donate

By Mail

Please mail your donation to:
The Independence Fund
412 Louise Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204



Online

Visit
independencefund.org
or scan the QR Code
to donate.



Donor-Advised Funds, Cash Transfers via Wire and ACH

Make a gift from your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF). Please contact the Development team to assist you!

Estate Gifts- Bequests, Trusts & Beneficiaries of Life Insurance or Retirement Plans

Bequests are gifts made through a will or living trust. Wills can be drafted with the consultation of a legal professional. To learn more, contact the Development team.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a tax-efficient way for those 70 ½ or older to donate from their IRA, while also counting towards your annual Required Minimum Distribution. To donate through a qualified charitable distribution, you can begin the process by contacting your financial institution to complete the required forms. You will need to provide the following:

Tax ID Number (EIN): #26-0322088
The Independence Fund
412 Louise Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204

Gifts of Stock

If you wish to make a gift of stock to take advantage of possible tax benefits, please contact us at Development@independencefund.org (888) 851-7996.

You will need to provide the stock name and number of donated shares. The Development team will provide you with details on how to direct the shares to The Independence Fund.



Contact the team at Development@independencefund.org or call (888) 851-7996 for more information on Company Matching Gifts and for participants in the Combined Federal Campaign #33594 (CFC) and State Employee Giving Campaigns.



Stay Connected

Stay connected with the impact The Independence Fund is making through your support all year long!

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