

Soldiers Home Restoration Project Partner Quotes

Organizations across the country, as well as locally, have joined together to make this complex historic project a reality. To learn more about the project partners and donors, view the messages below.

Read more about the project on [our website](#).

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) will provide ongoing monthly rental assistance for 101 veterans to reside there through our HUD-VASH housing voucher program.

“We at HUD are proud of this historic endeavor as we work collaboratively to house our nation’s heroes. This announcement represents another vital step in fulfilling our sacred commitment that all veterans have a home in the very nation they served to protect. We could not be more honored to support our veterans at Milwaukee’s Old Soldiers Home through our allotment of 101 HUD-VASH vouchers to help end veteran homelessness as we know it.”

- James A. Cunningham, HUD Midwest Deputy Regional Administrator

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE (HACM)

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee helped lead the restoration project and will administer the HUD-VASH vouchers.

“Once again, we see how it takes a village to raise a village. The intentionality of the VA, the commitment of HUD and WHEDA, and Mayor Barrett’s drive in supporting HACM’s participation, and the involvement of investors, philanthropic-minded corporations, and individuals are what made the preservation of Soldiers Home possible. We thank all of them and The Alexander Company for envisioning this endeavor.”

- Tony Pérez, Secretary-Executive Director of HACM

CENTER FOR VETERANS ISSUES (CVI)

Center for Veterans Issues is the facility operator managing housing units after renovations are complete.

“We’re honored to collaborate with a strong team of community partners to return a piece of national history to the service of veterans. Our nation’s veterans are in critical need of resources and support, and we’re eager to connect with and welcome the next 50 veterans to this community as the leasing process continues.”

- Eduardo M. Garza, Jr., President of The Center for Veteran’s Issues

MILWAUKEE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE (MPA)

From the beginning, MPA served as a partner in the Section 106 consultation which created the framework allowing the buildings to be preserved. The organization’s advocacy saw the successful nomination of the campus to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 11 Most Endangered list in 2011 and elevated it to a National Treasure in 2012, bringing national attention that helped encourage preservation. MPA partnered with the National Trust to create a Community Advisory Council of veterans and related organizations focused on exploring preservation solutions. MPA also served as the fiscal agent for and helped manage the \$3 million capital campaign necessary to fill the project’s financing gap. Finally, under the Save the Soldiers Home banner, our resources and community outreach strategies and more have brought awareness to the Soldiers Home and given the public a way to engage in its preservation.

“The successful rehabilitation of these incredibly significant buildings on the Soldiers Home campus is a testament to the power of historic preservation to not only save bricks and mortar, but to preserve the valuable stories that are imbued within them, and make a true difference in people’s lives as well. MPA is proud to have helped make this creative, visionary project a reality and return these special buildings to service to veterans.”

- Jeremy Ebersole, Executive Director, Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION (ACHP)

ACHP is an independent federal agency with the primary mission to encourage historic preservation in the government and across the nation. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which established the ACHP in 1966, directs federal agencies to act as responsible stewards when their actions affect historic properties. The ACHP is given the legal responsibility to assist federal agencies in their efforts and to ensure they consider preservation during project planning. The ACHP serves as the federal policy advisor to the President and Congress; recommends administrative and legislative improvements for protecting the nation’s diverse heritage; and reviews federal programs and policies to promote effectiveness, coordination, and consistency with national preservation policies. A key ACHP function is overseeing the federal historic preservation review process established by Section 106 of the NHPA. Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects, carried out by them or subject to their assistance or approval, on historic properties and provide the ACHP an opportunity to comment on these projects prior to a final decision on them.

“The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation wishes to extend its congratulations on the highly successful Milwaukee Soldiers Home project. This monumental achievement resulted from the collaboration of committed partners that jointly brought the return of this National Historic Landmark to productive use in service of our nation’s veterans. The Milwaukee Soldiers Home success story serves as an excellent example of how Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has been used effectively by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to take vacant and underutilized historic buildings in its stewardship and give them new life through its Enhanced Use Lease Program. Consultation with devoted community members, a hallmark of the Section 106 process, led to identifying opportunities for revitalizing these buildings. This incredible success - by the VA, Alexander Company, Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, Wisconsin Historical Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service, and so many other partners - exemplifies the power of meaningful consultation and we celebrate this outstanding accomplishment.”

- Reid J. Nelson, Executive Director, Acting for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

WISCONSIN HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (WHEDA)

WHEDA provided a \$30 million investment to the Soldier's Home project.

"It is our never-ending obligation, as a state and a nation, to support our outstanding veterans, who have served with honor and courage. It has been gratifying and wonderful to work with The Alexander Company and its partners on the Soldier's Home project with our housing tax credits and financing. Our collaborative efforts will help house and support our hometown heroes with stable, affordable housing."

- Joaquín Altoro, CEO of the WHEDA

WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum curator of veteran art, Yvette Pino, chose pieces for Old Main's public spaces from the "unintentional art" of Wisconsin veterans preserved in the museum's collection. Creatively cropped photos, mission and aerial reconnaissance images, landscapes, and bursts of color amid camouflage are now part of the floor-to-ceiling inspiring interior of the Soldiers Home.

"The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is honored to have been asked to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Old Main building. Much like the Soldiers Home, the museum was created to serve Wisconsin's Civil War veterans and those veterans that succeed them. We believe the imagery from the museum's collection created by Wisconsin veterans can inspire, comfort, and uplift this generation of Soldiers Home residents. We hope the art will help residents recall positive memories of fellowship, perseverance, and pride linked to their service. We realize not everyone is able to visit the museum in person, and so this collaboration is another avenue to share the stories of our men and women in uniform. We are grateful for the opportunity."

- Chris Kolakowski, Wisconsin Veteran's Museum Director

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff worked with the National Park Service on the National Register and National Historic Landmark designations for the campus and reviewed the work for the historic preservation tax credits.

"We celebrate this important step in the long-term vision to return these iconic and significant buildings to use. As one of three original branches of the National Asylum approved by President Abraham Lincoln in 1865, Milwaukee's Soldiers Home (now the Zablocki Medical Center) continues to provide care for veterans. The rehabilitation of Old Main and other buildings of the National Historic Landmark campus demonstrates how many partners can work together to expand this service to our veterans by giving new life to a property of national importance. Congratulations to the Alexander Company on the exceptional project to bring residents back to Old Main!"

- Dr. Daina Penkiunas, State Historic Preservation Officer, Wisconsin Historical Society

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has collaborated with the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance to serve as consulting parties and advocates for this important historic rehabilitation. In 2011 we included the National Soldiers' Home Historic District in Milwaukee on our list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, and we recognized the campus as a National Treasure in 2012, bringing national attention and resources to our preservation advocacy efforts. Since that time we have continued to work closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to pursue preservation solutions, traveling to the campus on a regular basis to meet with VA representatives.

"We are thrilled that the extraordinary historic preservation of one of our National Treasures has culminated to provide homes for veterans who need them. Restoring this iconic landmark in Milwaukee not only serves as a national inspiration, but it demonstrates the powerful ways that historic tax credits and historic preservation can support the dire need for affordable housing in this country and help resolve the issues of homelessness. The legacy of the building itself is a source of pride to those who live there. It adds meaning and value to the homes of those who have sacrificed for their country, while it also conserves the environment and all the many natural resources that new development would require.

The Alexander Company deserves special congratulations for their dedication in successfully navigating the complexities of this project. The National Trust looks forward to building this momentum to help the VA achieve preservation solutions for the historic Ward Memorial Theater, the Governor's Mansion, and the Chapel, on the Milwaukee VA campus."

- **Paul W. Edmondson, President and CEO, National Trust for Historic Preservation**

GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation administers the Milwaukee VA Soldiers Home Fund and oversees the dollars granted to the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, which was chosen to manage payments to vendors performing rehabilitation work. In addition, the Foundation has provided discretionary grant funding to the project, and we continue to share the opportunity to support the effort with our donors (individuals, families and others who partner with GMF for their philanthropy), who have proceeded to provide significant co-investments to advance the project.

"I am so inspired, though not at all surprised, by the outpouring of generosity from our community that has breathed new life into the Milwaukee Soldiers Home. Beyond its symbolic meaning, this preservation effort is providing a direct lifeline to many who have served our nation with honor. This project is strongly aligned with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's strategic priority of supporting quality housing options that residents can afford. Investments the Foundation and many of our donors have made in this work are helping provide housing stability to at-risk veterans and their families. In addition, this collaboration has resurrected and reclaimed a space of deep historical significance, providing Milwaukee area veterans a connection dating back to the Civil War era. This is a winning proposition from every perspective."

- **Ellen M. Gilligan, President & CEO, Greater Milwaukee Foundation**

NATIONAL EQUITY FUND (NEF)

"At NEF, projects like the Milwaukee Soldier's Home are the whole reason we exist: to support life-changing efforts that impact residents and communities alike," said Debbie Burkart, NEF's vice president for supportive housing. "We may not be able to change the circumstances that have left some of our veterans with physical, emotional and economic challenges. But, we can change what happens next. We can help make sure that incredible local assets like the Soldier's Home are preserved and that they can provide the housing and services veterans need to reclaim their health and independence. The city, the state, the VA and the Alexander Companies have achieved something truly remarkable here, and we're so proud to be a part of it."

- **Debbie Burkart, National VP of Supportive Housing for the National Equity Fund**

ADVOCATES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

"I am so proud of the work my office has done to ensure the Milwaukee Soldiers Home has a future, and that its future is rooted in serving veterans. It is so important that we were able to both maintain and restore one of the original historic Soldiers Homes sites. I am sincerely gratified to see its successful completion and to know that the Milwaukee Soldiers Home is now able to provide housing for veterans and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. I am passionate about what this building represents for our community and our nation and believe we have a continual duty to ensure every veteran can access the care and services they need. This has been a major collaborative effort that serves as a guide map for future housing and expanded services for our Veterans."

- **Congresswoman Moore, WI-04**

"Wisconsin's heroes deserve the best. The historic rehabilitation of the Soldiers Home will show the commitment our community has to making sure veterans get the support they need at home."

- **Former WI Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch**