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| |  | | --- | | Gerald Prestler, Navy veteran    Navy veteran Gerald Prestler received life-changing assistance from the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF), along with support from [Habitat for Humanity of Michigan](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..8IiBofkMVLRda5UMVGkhBafw5H9OQVL0bIEpAr3nklg/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l), [Home Depot Foundation](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..sR2znQrLSo32D212cHK0ffeDChE_Cs7GKc6-mcNa4hQ/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l) and [National Guard Association of Michigan](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..LDYtLtLKf-YAp3WbJuH8uJ17KES1Oq-0RbfhClqI1Vo/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    Prestler’s modest Lansing home had numerous issues, including a leaking roof. The 76-year-old had never heard of the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund or other available resources until one of his sisters mentioned she had heard of Vietnam War-era veterans getting help with similar issues.    Prestler, who was a communications technician and Spanish linguist based in Cuba in the late 1960s, didn’t think he qualified. Still, his sister encouraged him to contact a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) at the Ingham County Department of Veterans Affairs, who helped make the connection with the MVTF and Habitat for Humanity.    Through a multi-agency collaboration, Prestler’s home now has a new roof, renovated porch, new siding and windows, a new tankless water heater and other upgrades. His VSO also was able to secure Prestler a monthly pension from the VA due to his financial situation.    “This has truly been a life-changing experience,” said Prestler. “I’m really enjoying my newly improved home and getting back into the swing of things. My home is now a breath of fresh air.”    Between the MVTF, Habitat for Humanity, Home Depot Foundation and National Guard Association of Michigan, the home repairs totaled around $32,000. By combining resources, the organizations can tackle bigger projects, said MVTF Director Lindell Holm.    “This partnership between organizations brings the added value of having boots on the ground to talk to the veteran, walk through the property and evaluate the project and the veteran’s living situation,” Holm said. “They have the same passion for helping our veterans that the Trust Fund does and are committed to overcoming obstacles and exploring solutions to reach that objective of providing a resolution for a veteran facing an emergency situation.”    In addition, he said, “Our county partners are integral to the process by talking to veterans about the Trust Fund, helping veterans to fill out the emergency grant applications and also connecting them with other needed resources.”    Since its inception in 1946, the MVTF has helped veterans of every wartime era overcome unexpected expenses ranging from utility bills to home repairs to mortgage assistance and get back on their feet financially. To learn more about the Trust Fund, visit [Michigan.gov/MVAA](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..7lly6nFFHJoZMv0xSSMUJ8Us_olP0z_DMSeTK-8n4-Q/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    To apply for emergency funds from the MVTF, veterans should contact the [MVTF county committee](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..C_C8NJU-z7RGzE6--B6TgWN4Wc9aoMuh73tfQRO9Hhc/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l) serving the county where you reside or fill out and submit an [Emergency Assistance Form](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..n_4RiAZGOCZcR9dKHKytnF_xYboIZCdGIy_WJKjDxfs/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    Veterans can find a Veteran Service Officer by using our new search tool at [Michigan.gov/MVAA](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..LCOvUJWMfZLnqGmvWel0yeJU4JqrLVCkq_UAHy0FE7o/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l) or by calling 1-800-MICH-VET (1-800-642-4838). A year of gains for women veterans Women veterans saw some significant gains in 2021, though they still face significant barriers when seeking VA benefits.    Women veterans are the fastest growing demographic to serve in the military and also to enroll in the VA health-care system. As of 2021, women accounted for 2 million of the nation’s veterans; that number is expected to reach 2.2 million by 2046. Women veterans number more than 43,000 in Michigan and will continue making up a greater percentage of the state’s veteran population in coming decades, according to VA projections.    While the VA continues to adapt to the growing number of women veterans seeking health care, women still face significant barriers when seeking VA health-care benefits. These include not identifying as a veteran, lack of awareness and understanding of VA health-care benefits and perceptions that VA is an “all-male” health-care system. Women veterans are also more likely to experience mental health issues and military sexual trauma.    Federal legislation that benefitted women veterans in 2021 include the Protecting Moms Who Served Act, which improves maternal health care, and the Deborah Sampson Act, which paves the way to improve care for women veterans within the Veterans Health Administration.    Read more from [The American Legion](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..vQY06PvFaC2MGhgVZfGPKn06_ESwg0Bru5-4_HpZxfE/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l), which championed the legislation.    And find out what Michigan is doing for women veterans at [michigan.gov/MVAA](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..nMPJT7DaNQPr3VKi0gzdTJHOA_xNIKL1ncY5dhgGtio/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l), which includes information on our She is A Veteran awareness campaign, the Women Veteran Strong Peer Support program and more.    **\*\*\***    Join the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FVeteransAffairs%3F__cft__%255b0%255d%3DAZW3VocB0qV6PnV-4b99qEbicpLDzVn21Ebwb2QIU-_W3dRbheLSwoU41FHPwDJ-Z6ghmZRmV6YS_k84Fz7E_4BhypiV3t8Jv6gbZiA5hhcKd7ZgbHh4IzOLQZ3b326Qg3CHQQ_P-SHn-lwxikUfDrNDknl3UeJ76qsMvJbX7BCqSePbugrxg2aMg2O1UO4p3uOogfTo8rd_g0EbrdIviEp5liE0I6HXTaHOpkexS_aSXg%26__tn__%3D-%255dK-R&data=04%7C01%7Cheniona%40michigan.gov%7C04e0ff7d9da240abb4fd08da068efd28%7Cd5fb7087377742ad966a892ef47225d1%7C0%7C0%7C637829508450050082%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=270cXQVgDKSPhOe64INPyrcnMgof2HwKHzlK2heJrco%3D&reserved=0) LIVE on March 23 from 1-2 p.m. for a Q&A focused on women veterans. You can ask questions about women’s health and benefits services. Visit: [https://bit.ly/3q44GYC](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..6sIuwnSk4tEtiGIdDXxHbA8qumNMLM9dtURWn1pPqCI/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l)    You can ask questions to the following people:   * PO3 Ginger Miller - Founder and CEO, Women Veterans Interactive * 1SG Zelda Davis - Management Analyst, VA * CPO Missina Schallus - Communications Manager, Center for Women Veterans, VA * SPC Crystal Ellington - Communications Director, Minority Veterans of America * PO3 Melissa A. Washington - CEO & Founder, Women Veterans Alliance   [She is a Veteran](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAzMTYuNTQ5NzgyMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5taWNoaWdhbi5nb3YvbXZhYS93b21lbi12ZXRlcmFucyJ9.1F0Zrrs9w1k4Jk4L6o4zke9bJ_3Rt8cDMZZ8TJbVdGc/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l) How companies seek out veterans for employment From service jobs to executive positions, there is no shortage of opportunities for those who want lucrative and meaningful work. So, how are companies filling these positions and finding the best candidates?    Some companies are looking to those leaving military service to fill their ranks, offering support, accolades and transition programs to veterans, who they know bring unique skills and talents to their teams. And there are also nonprofit organizations who help facilitate matching veterans and servicemen and women with employers.    Walmart, Hilton and many other companies make a point to not only hire veterans but actively seek them out for positions. And nonprofits like Helping our Heroes, FourBlock and the Honor Foundation work with veterans and retired servicemen and women on interview skills, resumes and job placements.    Companies say veterans are great hires: They have leadership experience; they are calm under pressure and they come with a ready-to-work ethic. Veterans are also easily trained and adaptable, valuing teamwork.    Read the complete story in [Military Times](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..1aXp4p2UaOB-452wx_PFqNxdlfqm2N02_k597zell4U/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    \*\*\*  In Michigan, **several state departments are hiring law enforcement officers and encouraging veterans to apply**. They include the Michigan State Police and the Departments of Corrections and Natural Resources.    Learn more about [State Police job requirements, recruiting events and more](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..S_GEutAu3zxcTQQHl5hZzeTR6z78k1B-eWm7P64Ev8M/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    Learn more about [Department of Natural Resources jobs](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..CjkcOGncZdS0r4vp5hRffjaNwrpqfOur-8nLq8awBG0/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    Learn more about [Department of Corrections jobs](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..Ya1O7g4_YV8u6QXJAM6x0B9TZBUli5vBOQTaHFJSWU4/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).    \*\*\*  For veterans and their families seeking employment assistance in Michigan, Veterans' Employment Services (VES) provides program-specific services with eligibility requirements as defined by federal law.    VES, which is housed in the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Quality (LEO), provides a host of intensive services. Those include resource information focusing on the needs of eligible veterans and spouses who are unable to obtain employment through the core services provided by Michigan Works! Service Centers along with individualized, one-on-one career services that are designed to reduce or eliminate barriers into the workforce.    Veterans in need of employment assistance should contact the nearest Michigan Works! One-Stop Service Center by calling 800-285-WORKS (9675) or visiting [MichiganWorks.org](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..Psg38hmtWvDEkIiEpM6gnfM86G6qLyt1yyc2kws-fKQ/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).     More information about Veterans’ Employment Services is available at [Michigan.gov/VES](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..7xKOCVAd_8W3WFV7lEpaHV8caJ12Xsmcm_UzvJEvUjY/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).     Register today and start your job search at Pure Michigan Talent Connect at [MiTalent.org](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..jmlpwSzxcuq7rqyjOpwHP248s2x1PJfXtLmWJyrwKd8/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l).  [Lean on us](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAzMTYuNTQ5NzgyMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5taWNoaWdhbi5nb3YvbXZhYSJ9.DtHJ_woPaJpvvx2lv21a7KeJgBdziF3K6eWHYDaq-eI/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l) U.S. veterans joining Ukrainian fight could lose benefits Since the Russian Federation launched, in its words, a "special military operation" on Feb. 24, there has been a steady stream of footage of heartbreaking mass atrocities inflicted by the invading Russian military. Much of the world has looked on in shock. These are unfolding events the world has not seen coming out of Europe since the tragic collapse and disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.    Many American veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have had sleepless nights, filled with intense anxiety from viewing the ongoing atrocities. In response to calls from Ukrainian officials for foreign fighters to join a newly formed foreign legion, many American veterans have shown interest in joining the fight in Ukraine.    Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has ordered a temporary lift on visas for foreign fighters and has taken to social media to actively encourage everyone with military experience and training willing to join his countrymen to help his nation resist the Russian war effort.    But do American veterans risk losing their earned benefits by joining a foreign army? The answer, sadly, is yes, according to a column in Military.com by an attorney practicing military law.    A key limitation on the participation of retired United States military personnel is found in the Constitution itself. It lies in Article I, Section 9, Clause 8. This constitutional provision, known in American legal doctrine as the "Emoluments Clause," specifically prohibits any person "holding any office of profit or trust" in the federal government from accepting any gift, emolument, office or title of any kind from any king, prince or foreign state without the consent of Congress.    Read the rest of the column in [Military.com](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..vTwpu6YOKM1Z6lLT3ACMt9rkNpl943P_1DlLkd7k6Sc/s/1018038920/br/128182985554-l). | |