

[Foundation]

External Organizations Strategic Initiatives Funding Request Form

1. Provide a brief description of the funding request. Include the goal and outcomes of the proposed program and a high-level summary of key program activities. (3 to 4 sentences):

Musical Bridges Around the World requests \$x to expand our Soldier Recovery Program, which provides therapeutic musical experiences for wounded warriors at [site]. The program aims to enhance the mental health and emotional resilience of 300 additional military personnel through monthly performances, interactive workshops led by Grammy-winning artists, and culturally diverse programming. Key activities include "Musical Mornings" events, percussion circles, guitar workshops with a Grammy-winning artist, and special holiday concerts that create community connection during potentially isolating times. Outcomes will include reduced stress/anxiety levels for 85% of participants, establishment of consistent programming at [site], and development of a sustainable framework to measure the impact of music on healing and recovery.

2. Describe your organization's history and relevant experience with similar projects:

Musical Bridges Around the World (MBAW) was founded in 1998 by Dr. Anya Grokhovski and a group of music lovers to promote cultural understanding through innovative music programming. With a 27-year history in San Antonio, MBAW's mission is to celebrate shared humanity by providing access to global arts for all, with all programming offered free to the public since 2015.

MBAW has extensive experience delivering therapeutic arts programming to vulnerable populations through several core programs:

The organization's Military Outreach Program began in April 2024 when the [site] approached MBAW to provide live performances and workshops for 90-130 wounded, ill, or injured soldiers enrolled monthly. Throughout 2024, MBAW has successfully delivered diverse cultural experiences to the [site], including performances by Grammy-winning percussionists, Cinco de Mayo celebrations, "Musical Mornings" events, percussion circles, and holiday concerts.

Similarly, MBAW's Golden Age program has provided therapeutic musical experiences to seniors for over a decade, growing from a single concert in 2010 to a now robust initiative bringing over 30 performances annually to senior centers across San Antonio. This program demonstrates MBAW's ability to sustain and scale therapeutic music interventions for vulnerable populations.

The organization has received significant recognition, including the Fair Saturday Award at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain (2019) for social impact through arts and culture, the Carver Development Board Impact Award, and San Antonio Business Journal Nonprofit and Corporate Philanthropy awards. MBAW was also selected by the H.E. Butt Foundation for its sixth Capacity Building Peer Cohort in 2023, receiving a \$x grant and developing a five-year strategic plan.

With 25,000+ children served annually through Musical Sprouts programming and a proven track record of cross-sector partnerships with organizations like x, y, and z, MBAW has demonstrated its capacity to deliver high-quality arts programming with measurable outcomes for diverse, underserved populations.

3. Describe the “why” for this project – what need is this program addressing? What specific needs does your target population face? Where possible, include data specific to your geographic area.

The Soldier Recovery Program addresses critical gaps in holistic therapeutic support for wounded, ill, and injured military personnel during their recovery and transition period. The [site] regularly serves 90-130 soldiers who face complex challenges including:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychological trauma
- Traumatic brain injuries (TBI)
- Chronic illnesses and physical injuries
- Emotional distress during the transition from military to civilian life

As confirmed by site clinical management, these soldiers require diverse therapeutic activities to support their mental and physical well-being as part of their individualized care plans. However, the [site] has struggled to consistently provide the required music and arts programming that research shows is essential to long-term recovery.

While our program does not claim to measure every clinical outcome associated with music-based therapy, it is informed by a robust body of research that highlights how music can significantly benefit veterans recovering from trauma, injury, and chronic stress:

Mental Health & Emotional Regulation:

- Music interventions reduce PTSD symptoms by up to 25% (Journal of Traumatic Stress, 2018)
- Group music therapy decreases depression by 21% and anxiety by 18% (Military Medicine, 2020)
- 83% of veterans in music programs report improved ability to manage emotional triggers (NIH Sound Health Initiative, 2021)

Cognitive & Physical Rehabilitation:

- For veterans with TBI, music-based rehab improves attention span by 30% (Neuropsychological Rehabilitation, 2019)
- Enhances memory recall by 35% when information is presented musically (Brain Injury, 2021)
- Increases gait efficiency by 15-17% for those with mobility issues (Frontiers in Neurology, 2022)

Physiological Benefits & Social Impact:

- Regular music therapy reduces cortisol levels by 19% and lowers blood pressure by an average of 6 mm Hg (American Journal of Music Therapy, 2020)
- Participants report improved sleep and a 40% increase in social connectedness

Cost & Treatment Outcomes:

- Music therapy integrated with standard care can reduce medication dependence by 24%, cut healthcare costs by \$2,200 per veteran annually, shorten recovery times by 15-20%, and improve treatment adherence by 35%

San Antonio, known as Military City USA, is home to one of the largest concentrations of active-duty service members and veterans in the country. One base alone supports more than 80,000 military personnel. Despite the size of this population, access to sustained, arts-based recovery programming within military healthcare settings remains limited. This program helps close that gap by delivering consistent, research-backed music engagement directly to those who need it most.

4. Describe the project and how it addresses the stated need noted above. What key services will you provide? Who are your collaborative partners?

The Soldier Recovery Program delivers high-quality musical experiences and cultural programming specifically designed to support the healing journey of wounded warriors and military personnel at [site]. The program addresses the critical need for holistic therapeutic support through the following key service components:

1. **Therapeutic Performances:** "Musical Mornings" events, special holiday concerts for military personnel and families, cultural celebration events (such as Cinco de Mayo), and diverse world-class musicians representing various cultural traditions. These performances provide emotional stimulation, cognitive benefits, and social connection in a non-clinical setting.
2. **Interactive Workshops:** Percussion circles led by Grammy-winning artists, hands-on musical experiences fostering connection and expression, guitar workshops with a Grammy-winning artist, and exploration of culturally diverse musical traditions. These participatory experiences provide active engagement with music, which research shows is particularly effective for recovery from trauma and traumatic brain injury.
3. **Community Events:** Military Spouse Recognition Dinner, "Walk through time" events inspired by WWII-era USO cantina dances, and integration of military families into community cultural experiences. These events address isolation and support the vital family connections that facilitate healing.
4. **Program Evaluation & Development:** Pre- and post-surveys measuring anxiety reduction and mood improvement, collaboration with military leadership to track outcomes, continuous program refinement based on participant feedback through program satisfaction surveys, and development of new programming based on identified needs.

The program directly responds to the [site]'s requirement to provide diverse therapeutic activities that support soldiers' holistic recovery. By offering non-medicinal interventions through music, the

program addresses PTSD symptoms, aids cognitive rehabilitation for TBI patients, reduces anxiety and depression, and fosters social connectedness—all documented needs of the target population.

The Soldier Recovery Program has established strong collaborative partnerships including:

1. **[Site]:** The primary partner, where clinical management confirms that "music therapy has proven to be a powerful component in our soldiers' holistic recovery journey, reducing stress and evoking positive emotions."
2. **USO:** Supporting military service members and their families through morale, welfare, and recreation services that complement the Soldier Recovery Program's mission.
3. **Grammy-winning and internationally acclaimed artists:** Professional musicians who provide high-quality performances and workshops

Through these partnerships, the Soldier Recovery Program leverages MBAW's 27 years of experience in delivering transformative musical experiences while responding to the specific needs and protocols of military healthcare settings. The program's collaborative approach ensures that musical interventions complement traditional therapies and are delivered in a manner that respects the unique experiences and challenges of wounded warriors.

5. Provide a budget narrative to describe how the funds will be utilized. For capital project requests, provide the overall campaign goal, progress made to date, and the plan for securing remaining funds.

[Foundation being applied to]'s generous contribution of \$x will directly support key components of our Soldier Recovery Program, which uses the arts as a tool for emotional healing, connection, and well-being. While not a traditional clinical therapy program, this initiative provides an accessible and nontraditional pathway to therapeutic outcomes, particularly valuable for service members who may be reluctant to participate in formal counseling or group therapy sessions.

Budget Category	Amount	Description
Artistic Fees & Facilitation	\$x	Covers compensation for professional musicians leading interactive workshops and live performances designed to promote emotional expression and social connection.
General Liability Insurance	\$x	Covers insurance premiums for all in-person program activities, including those conducted on military premises.
Program Supplies & Printed Materials	\$x	Funds printed materials (e.g., lyric sheets, activity guides), basic workshop supplies (e.g., percussion, guitar accessories), small participant incentives, and limited

		technology (e.g., projector, speaker, tablets) to support engagement and data collection.
Program Coordination & Administrative Support	\$x	Includes staff time dedicated to coordinating logistics, maintaining communication, tracking engagement, and managing program documentation.
Evaluation & Reporting	\$x	Includes staff time dedicated to data collection and analysis to evaluate emotional and social outcomes—such as improved mood, increased sense of belonging, and reduced feelings of isolation—using surveys, participant feedback, and other evaluation tools.
Design, Printing, & Mailing of Program Report	\$x	Covers the professional design, printing, and distribution of the final program report for funders and community stakeholders. The report will highlight program impact, participant stories, and the role of funder support in advancing therapeutic outcomes. Final data will be analyzed at the close of Quarter 4 and incorporated into the report to support future sustainability efforts.

Your investment empowers us to reach those who may benefit from creative approaches to healing and to document and share those outcomes with the broader community.

6. Describe the sustainability plan the project at the end of the funding cycle (not applicable for capital project requests):

This program began as a pilot initiative in April 2024, when [site staff member] approached MBAW to provide live performances and workshops for soldiers enrolled in the [site program]. As we are not planning to charge soldiers for these therapeutic music services, our sustainability strategy focuses on building a diversified funding base through several key approaches:

1. **Evidence-Based Expansion:** As we continue to collect data demonstrating our program's positive impact on soldiers' quality of life, mental health, and recovery outcomes, we will strengthen our case for support. Our current evaluation framework measures anxiety reduction, mood improvement, and social connectedness, providing compelling evidence that will attract additional funders interested in military health and wellness initiatives.
2. **Diversified Funding Sources:** We will pursue a mix of funding streams, including:
 - Foundation grants focused on military support, mental health, and arts therapy
 - Corporate sponsors with connections to military communities
 - Individual donor development targeting military supporters and arts patrons
 - Potential government funding through VA and military health initiatives

3. **Cost-Effective Program Structure:** Our program model leverages existing relationships with world-class artists and employs a scalable approach that can expand or contract based on available funding while maintaining program quality and impact.
4. **Strategic Partnerships:** Our collaboration with [site] and the USO creates institutional support that enhances program credibility and opens doors to additional funding networks specifically interested in military well-being.
5. **Capacity Building:** Part of this funding will support the development and refinement of standardized program materials, evaluation tools, and tracking systems that will streamline operations and make the program more sustainable over time.
6. **Long-Term Vision:** Building on MBAW's 27-year history and success with programs like Golden Age (which has served seniors for over a decade), we have demonstrated our ability to sustain programming for vulnerable populations through multiple funding cycles.

The Soldier Recovery Program aligns with MBAW's five-year strategic plan developed through our participation in the H.E. Butt Foundation's Capacity Building Peer Cohort, positioning it as a core component of our organizational mission moving forward. This institutional commitment ensures the program will receive appropriate operational support even as we continue to build dedicated funding.

7. Provide a timeline for implementation, including any key dates and milestones.

Implementation Timeline (Fiscal Year 2025-2026)

Quarter 1 (October-December 2025): Program Launch & Holiday Programming

- Finalize performance and workshop schedule for the full year with [site] leadership
- Establish baseline measurements for participant outcomes
- Conduct staff training on program protocols and evaluation methods
- Perform at kickoff "Musical Mornings" event for [site] participants
- Continue twice-monthly interactive guitar workshops with a Grammy-winning artist
- Provide musical entertainment for special [site] Thanksgiving program
- Deliver musical performances for USO/[site] Lunch with Santa in early December
- Offer musical entertainment for [site] Christmas celebration event
- Perform at [site] Christmas Eve Brunch for soldiers remaining on base during holidays
- Conduct mid-quarter evaluation with [site] program staff
- Prepare first quarter progress report

Quarter 2 (January-March 2026): Evaluation & Program Enhancement

- Evaluate and review first quarter program impact data and adjust as needed based on results
- Introduce new artists/instructor for workshop
- Present first quarterly report to stakeholders
- Expand workshop offerings based on participant interest and feedback

- Provide musical entertainment for Military Spouse Recognition Dinner event

Quarter 3 (April-June 2026): Mid-Year Assessment & Community Integration

- Conduct mid-year program evaluation
- Present mid-year findings to [site] leadership and MBAW board
- Refine programming based on evaluation results
- Begin developing sustainability plan for program continuation
- Provide musical entertainment for [site] Cinco de Mayo celebration at USO
- Offer musical performances for "Walk through time" event inspired by WWII-era USO cantina dances
- Launch summer programming initiative

Quarter 4 (July-September 2026): Capacity Building & Future Planning

- Document program procedures and best practices
- Develop training materials for program expansion
- Begin outreach to potential new funding partners
- Conduct comprehensive program evaluation measuring all outcome metrics
- Create and share final grant report, highlighting program impact and participant stories to foster sustainability
- Finalize sustainability plan for continued programming

Key Milestones:

- Serve 300 unique military personnel throughout the year
- Achieve 85% of participants reporting reduced stress/anxiety levels
- Establish consistent programming schedule at [site]
- Develop comprehensive evaluation framework for ongoing program assessment
- Create foundation for program sustainability through documented outcomes
- Secure additional funding commitments for program continuation

This timeline ensures systematic program implementation, regular evaluation points, and strategic planning for future sustainability, maximizing the impact of the \$x grant investment over the full 12-month period.

These performance measures align with research demonstrating that music therapy can reduce PTSD symptoms by 20-25% in veterans, decrease depression symptoms by up to 21%, and increase social connectedness measures by 40% in veteran populations.

8. Provide an unduplicated number of people to be served annually with this funding.

Due to the confidential nature of the [site] and the sensitivity of the population we serve, tracking an unduplicated count of all participants, particularly for large-scale performances and community

events, is not currently feasible. However, for small-group workshops, we are able to maintain more accurate attendance logs and track unduplicated individuals over time.

We are actively working in collaboration with [site] staff to determine a reliable method for estimating unduplicated participation across all program components. Based on current attendance trends and frequency of engagement, we conservatively estimate reaching 300 unique military personnel annually through a combination of workshops, therapeutic performances, and community events.

9. List at least two (2) specific performance measures your project will track. Include the number of people projected to be impacted for each proposed measure. Describe how the organization will measure impact for each proposed measure listed. Include a description of the organization’s historical performance for this or similar projects (if the funding request is for a new program):

- **Example performance metrics:**
 - **50 veterans will obtain permanent housing**
 - **45 veterans will maintain housing six months after exiting the program**

1. Improved Mental Well-being Among Military Personnel

- Target Impact: 85% of participants will report reduced stress, improved mood, or increased emotional well-being after participating in musical performances or interactive workshops.
- Projected Reach: 300 military personnel engaged in at least one workshop or performance during the grant period.
- Measurement Method:
 - Workshops: Pre- and post-surveys administered in small-group sessions (up to 10 participants per session), measuring changes in mood, stress, and sense of belonging using validated tools.
 - Performances: Short satisfaction surveys will be used to collect participant-reported emotional outcomes such as relaxation, joy, or a sense of connection. While full pre/post surveys are not feasible for large groups, qualitative feedback and observational data will help assess performance impact.
- Historical Performance: After just three guitar workshops, participants reported a 15.38% increase in feelings of joy and a 15.34% increase in sense of belonging. 100% of surveyed participants said the workshop helped them feel happier, more content, or more relaxed. While survey data from performances is newly being collected, anecdotal feedback has shown strong emotional resonance and participant enthusiasm.

2. Increased Program Engagement and Reach

- Target Impact: 300 military personnel will actively participate in the Soldier Recovery Program through a combination of large-scale therapeutic performances, small-group workshops, and community events

- Guitar workshops: Up to 10 participants per session × 2 sessions/month = ~20-30 unique participants annually
- Performance events: 75-300 attendees per event x 8 annual performances = ~300 unique attendees annually
- Measurement Method: Total attendance tracking at all program activities. For interactive workshops, detailed attendance logs will track participant progress over time. For larger events, headcounts and registration information will be collected. Program satisfaction surveys will be administered at all events to gather qualitative feedback on impact and suggestions for improvement. While pre/post surveys are not feasible for these larger groups, participant reactions and perceived benefits will be monitored through these feedback tools.
- Historical Performance: Current workshop sessions regularly draw up to 10 participants, allowing for individualized interaction and meaningful impact. Performance events have drawn 75-300 attendees, depending on the venue and occasion. Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and new satisfaction tools are being implemented to expand evaluation capacity for larger audiences.