## FY2023 Buncombe County Tipping Point Grant Report

Organization Name:	Warrior Canine Connection
Project Name:	Connecting Buncombe County Veterans Through the Healing Power of Dogs

Activities Accomplished	Annual Goal	Amount Completed	
Number of unique Veterans provided Mission Based Trauma Recovery			
programming	150	245	
Number of assistance dogs placed with disabled Veterans	15	21	
Percent of Mission Based Trauma Recovery participants with reduced			
PTSD symptoms	80%	78%	

Expenses (please list <u>all</u> grant related expenses)		Amount Spent	
Personnel	\$	5,000.00	
		5 000	
TOTAL:	\$	5,000	

## Narrative summary of grant related activities

Long-established provider of skilled service dogs and Veteran mental health programs, WCC first brought its operations to North Carolina in 2018 through a partnership with the Buncombe County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC). At the time of this grant application, demand for WCC's services had been quickly growing and WCC hoped to meet this need. With a generous grant, WCC anticipated the additional personnel would allow us to increase capacity at the North Carolina site by 100% within 12 months; engage 150 unique Veterans in its Mission Based Trauma Recovery (MBTR) program—a unique form of Animal Assisted Therapy; reduce PTSD symptoms in 80% of Veteran MBTR participants; and place 15 assistance dogs. We are pleased to share that WCC not only met, but exceeded the number of wounded Veterans it had been serving by 226%.

During the grant,WCC served 245 unique wounded Veterans in the County. The experiential and therapeutic, goal-focused MBTR curriculum resulted in 78% of Veterans reporting a reduction in PTSD symptoms. Additionally, Veterans in MBTR programming helped train 21 assistance dogs which were placed with disabled Veterans and Military Families. The increased staffing capacity also allowed WCC to explore new collaboration with state and federal government partners, as well as fellow nonprofit Veteran service providers. For example, during the grant WCC's MBTR curriculum was incorporated into Wounded Warrior Project's unique Project Odyssey rehabilitation retreats taking place in Asheville. WCC's staff also brought MBTR programming to the Veterans Healing Farm and Warriors at Ease to complement their services. Most recently, WCC and Warriors at Ease co-hosted Puppy Yoga. In addition to nonprofits, the grant allowed WCC to work with the Buncombe County VTC, and the Charles George VA Medical Center as part of the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act. Signed by the President in 2021, the PAWS Act calls to replicate WCC's MBTR program model at 5 VA hospital sites throughout the county. We are delighted that Buncombe County is home to one of those 5 pilot sites. WCC is grateful for the partnership of Buncombe County in its work to improve the health and wellness of disabled Veterans so that they can reconnect with life, their families, their communities, and each other.