

Las Positas College For Immediate Release

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Las Positas College's Veterans First Program Awarded Safeway Grant

(Livermore, CA) - The Safeway Foundation Grant was recently awarded to Las Positas College's (LPC) Veterans First Program, which provides financial support to student veterans. The award, totaling over \$40,000, is the largest the initiative has obtained in its six year history of receiving the grant.

The funds will directly support Veterans First primary goal, supporting student veterans and their families as they transition from college to career success. With generous gifts like the Safeway Grant, Veterans First provides a variety of services and discretionary relief funds.

Funding for childcare is one of the most sought-after services supported by the grant, as approximately half of recently returning post-9/11 veterans support families and childcare is extremely expensive. Even those who receive the GI Bill still struggle to cover childcare costs. The 2019 Safeway Grant funded a pilot program to begin subsidizing these costs, requiring student veterans demonstrate academic success with a minimum GPA of 2.5 and provide evidence of their child's consistent attendance in the childcare program.

"Transitioning from the military to civilian life is much like transitioning to motherhood - difficult, and even more difficult with disabilities," said Amanda Paustian, a Coast Guard veteran, Las Positas College student, and current recipient of childcare support from Veterans First. "I could not afford to even return to work after having my son. I stayed home with him out of necessity until I sought help from the Las Positas Veterans Resource Center. I am now in school full time, working toward my degree in communications. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to show my son the value of hard work and he is thankful for the awesome classroom experience he is getting. These resources are life-changing and spanning generations."

Providing transportation is another way that Veterans First will remove roadblocks on the path to career success for student veterans. Through a partnership with ACE Train system, student veterans are now charged only half of the fee to ride, and Veterans First will subsidize the other half with grant funds.

"Our student veterans come from over 52 cities, and many from cities over the Altamont Pass where housing is more affordable," said Todd Steffan, Veterans First supervisor. "Yet they want to attend Las Positas College, sometimes especially because of the veterans services our model program offers."

Additionally, the grant will support Operation Relief Fund to provide emergency gas cards, food vouchers and automotive repair vouchers for student veterans in need.

"This type of support is expensive, but vital in stabilizing the key necessities for veteran students and has marked impact on student success," said Steffan.

The funds will also be used to continue providing workshops, honoring events, mentoring programs, and tutoring.

For more information about Veterans First, contact Todd Steffan at tsteffan@laspositacollege.edu.

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About Las Positas College

Las Positas College currently enrolls 9,300 students and offers curriculum for students seeking transfer to a four-year college or university, career preparation, or basic skills education. The College provides university transfer classes, retraining classes for those in need of employment or career advancement, a first-time educational opportunity for many adults, enrichment classes for those seeking a broader perspective, and career and technical training for those entering the technical and paraprofessional workforce.