



November 2022

Wisconsin National Guard Foundation, Inc., Established

Recognizing that there are situations when serious financial issues can threaten a member's continued service in the Wisconsin Air and Army National Guard, or prevent members from attaining educational goals, the permanent not-for-profit, 501(c)3 Wisconsin National Guard Foundation, Inc. (WINGF) has been established.

In its Articles of Incorporation, filed with the Internal Revenue Service and State of Wisconsin, the Foundation lists its overarching purposes to include:

- Provide scholarships and leadership development opportunities for National Guard members and their families;
- Support National Guard members in need;
- Raise public awareness of the valuable role the National Guard plays in assisting and protecting Wisconsin residents following natural disasters.

Long an objective of the Wisconsin National Guard Association (WINGA) which provided seed money to help form the Foundation, it is also strongly supported by the Wisconsin National Guard Enlisted Association (WNGEA).

With the WINGA support formalized in December 2020, a four-person enabling committee was created to draft legal Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Committee members were COL Eric Leckel, WINGA president; COL (Ret) Michael Williams, WINGA executive director; LTC (Ret) D.J. Klauser, WINGA treasurer and an attorney; and COL (Ret) Peter D. Fox who has extensive experience in non-profit management.

By June 2021, the Foundation began recruiting its 11-member Board of Directors. With the new Board intact, Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were approved and other necessary policy and procedure documents created and accepted. Simultaneously, a Foundation web site – <https://www.wi-ngfoundation.org/> – was launched and a distinctive logo created. A listing of Foundation officers and directors as well as documents establishing it can be found on this website.

Three working committees than were created to pursue Foundation objectives: Grants and Scholarships, Donor Identification and Development, and Communications and Marketing.

Meanwhile, the Foundation has achieved its first “wins” as it has now received unrestricted and dedicated funds totaling nearly \$50,000. While the Grants and Scholarships Committee works to develop programs and application materials for scholarship and financial grants, the Foundation has been designated as administrator for the Wilkening Memorial Scholarship Fund to honor the late Maj. Gen. Albert Wilkening, Adjutant for Wisconsin (2003-2007) who died in April 2020, and from the Scharine Memorial Fund to honor the late Brig. Gen Charles Scharine, commander of the 32d Infantry Brigade (1984-1987) who passed in May 2016.

Additionally, gifts have been received from private citizens, philanthropists and WINGF directors. Donations can be made through the Foundation website; individuals and families interested in making a legacy gift may contact Executive Director Michael Williams directly through information located on the website.

It is anticipated that scholarship program information will be available during the First Quarter of 2023, as well as application information for a financial assistance program.

The Foundation also is evaluating ways it might support local-unit community relations initiatives that currently are not supported through recruiting, public affairs or other resources. These might include significant unit anniversaries or achievements or specific community-involvement events.

For more information, contact COL (Ret.) Michael Williams, WINGF executive director, at wingfoundation21@gmail.com or 608.242.3104.

###