

Historic Preservation Efforts Serve Veterans through Cooperation and Community Stewardship, Milwaukee Soldiers Home, Milwaukee Wisconsin

In late 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) presented [the ACHP/HUD Secretary's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation](#) to the Milwaukee Soldiers' Home rehabilitation project. This effort, a collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), [the Alexander Company](#), the Milwaukee Housing Authority, and other stakeholders, led to a permanent supportive community for Veterans through restoration of the historic campus. With the aid of the [Enhanced Use Lease](#) (EUL)

program this project created 101 housing units for Veterans at the soldiers home, part of the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center.

This project was previously recognized by the [National Trust](#)



"Old Main" building at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home, Milwaukee Wisconsin.

[for Historic Preservation](#) on November 4, 2021 with a [Richard H. Driehaus Foundation National Preservation Award](#), and received a Save America's Treasures grant.

The \$44M public-private partnership rehabilitated six long-vacant buildings on the National Historic Landmark campus which were constructed between 1869-1922. The partnership first rehabilitated Old Main (B2), the most prominent and recognizable building on campus, followed by the Administration Building (B1), the Catholic Chaplain's Quarters (B14) and 3 duplexes (B18, B19 and B62).

Despite being one of the most intact soldier's homes in the United States, as of 2010 the Milwaukee Soldiers Home was in poor condition, as many of the buildings sat vacant for several decades. A hole in the roof of Old Main threatened its structural stability leading to the nomination to the National Trust's 11 most endangered historic places list in 2011.

This project, more than a decade in the making, is a reminder that historic preservation not only protects the past but can also serve the future. Preservation efforts combined with strategic partnerships tackled the issue of homelessness among Veteran communities while simultaneously engaging in community building and the safeguard of historic properties. The Milwaukee Soldiers Home is a success, but more importantly it serves as a successful model which can be replicated across the country to continue serving and protecting America's Veterans and cultural heritage simultaneously.