

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**Strength In Service:  
Empowering Heroes and  
Families through Resiliency**



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# Introduction

As we reflect on the past year at At Ease USA, I am filled with gratitude for the resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment of our team, partners, and supporters. Together, we have made meaningful strides in our mission to provide accessible, effective mental health services and support for veterans, active-duty military personnel, frontline healthcare workers, and their families.

This year, our programs have continued to grow and adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of those we serve. From expanding trauma-informed yoga classes to deepening our partnerships with organizations like the Nebraska National Guard, we have reached more individuals with the care and resources they deserve.

We also faced challenges, including transitions in our Peer Support Specialist roles, which highlighted the importance of flexibility and innovation in meeting the needs of our community. These experiences have reinforced our belief in the value of peer-led initiatives and the importance of creating sustainable, impactful programs.

None of this would be possible without the incredible generosity of our donors and the collaborative spirit of our partners. Your support fuels our efforts to combat the staggering rates of veteran suicide and ensure that every individual who walks through our doors feels seen, heard, and supported.

Thank you for being an integral part of our mission. I invite you to explore this report to learn more about the impact we've achieved together and the vision that drives us forward.

With gratitude and hope,

*Beth*



**Beth Kramer**  
Executive Director





# Mission and Vision

## ➔ Mission

At Ease USA (AEU) is committed to providing access to confidential trauma treatment for veterans, active military, frontline healthcare workers, and their loved ones suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress, moral injury, and suicidal ideations.

## ➔ Vision

At Ease USA envisions a future where every veteran, active-duty military member, frontline healthcare worker and their family has access to the mental health support they need to lead fulfilling, resilient lives. We strive to be a leader in breaking the stigma surrounding mental health, fostering hope, and creating a community where those who serve our community are empowered to thrive.



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# Board of Directors



**Patrick McMahon**  
President



**Alex Bakke**  
Vice President



**Trevon Brooks**



**John Gibb**



**Joe Menicucci, Jr.**



**Michael Pallesen**



**Eric Talmadge**



**Sheila Waring**



**John Waters**



**Josh Weiss**

# Our Services

## ⊕ Therapy

AEU provides confidential, evidence-based therapy services for military personnel, veterans, frontline healthcare workers, and their families, addressing post-traumatic stress, moral injury, and suicidal ideations. Our licensed clinicians offer individual, couples, and family therapy, ensuring accessible care without barriers.

## ⊕ Peer Support

AEU provides peer support for military personnel, veterans, and their families, connecting them with trained specialists who share similar experiences. Through one-on-one and group support, AEU helps navigate post-traumatic stress and transition challenges, fostering trust, resilience, and healing.

## ⊕ Wellness Activities

AEU offers wellness programs that promote healing and resilience for military personnel, veterans, frontline healthcare workers, and their families. Through trauma-informed yoga, mindfulness, and holistic therapies, AEU provides tools to manage stress, enhance well-being, and support mental health. These programs complement therapy and peer support, fostering a comprehensive approach to healing.



# Empowering Veterans, Strengthening Communities

At Ease USA continues to break down barriers to mental health care for military service members, veterans, frontline healthcare workers, and their families. The At Ease Therapy Program has experienced unprecedented growth, reflecting the increasing demand for confidential, trauma-informed support. Since 2022, our client base has expanded by **427%**, underscoring the critical need for accessible therapy services in our community.

In 2024, At Ease USA served 290 clients, with 213 participating in therapy—a significant milestone in our mission to provide essential mental health care. Approximately 25% of those served were family members or loved ones, reinforcing the importance of a holistic support system.

Our clients represent a diverse demographic, with the youngest at just eight years old and the oldest at 79. While the majority of our clients identify as white/Caucasian, we have seen a growth trend in African American participation.

Additionally, we are providing therapy for five Peer Support clients in the Sarpy County Veterans Treatment Court and 12 incarcerated clients in Douglas County Corrections, ensuring that those facing legal and systemic challenges also receive the mental health care they need.

At Ease USA remains committed to ensuring that cost is never an obstacle to receiving care. Through donor support, grants, and partnerships, we continue to provide therapy at little to no cost for those in need. Our data shows that **49% of clients reported an annual income below \$29,000.**

As the demand for services continues to grow, At Ease USA is dedicated to expanding access to therapy, increasing provider availability, and strengthening community outreach. With continued support, we will ensure that no service member, veteran, healthcare worker, or military family is left without the mental health care they deserve.



# Peer Support

At Ease USA is committed to providing unwavering support to veterans in need, and our peer support program is a shining example of that mission in action. Since joining AEU in September 2024, Art Williams, a 20-year Air Force veteran, has been making a profound impact on veterans involved in the court and corrections systems—many of whom might otherwise have no support.

Despite working part-time, Art has already assisted 26 veterans since late September, offering hope, guidance, and understanding to those who feel lost and unseen. His visits to veterans in Douglas and Sarpy County jails have not only lifted spirits but have also led to a growing number of word-of-mouth referrals. Veterans in custody have shared how much they appreciate Art's positivity and encouragement, regardless of their sentencing outcomes. Many say they are grateful to have an ally who understands their struggles without judgment.

One particularly powerful example of Art's impact involved a veteran facing up to 50 years in prison. Recognizing that the veteran's struggles stemmed from untreated post-traumatic stress, Art and his colleagues advocated for treatment over punishment. Their efforts resulted in the veteran receiving inpatient treatment instead of a lengthy prison sentence—an outcome that could change the trajectory of his life.

In Veterans Treatment Court, Art provides an extra layer of support and accountability for veterans in recovery, helping them navigate the challenges of rehabilitation. Peer support is often the bridge for veterans hesitant to engage in formal therapy. Fewer than one-third of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress receive the proper mental health care needed to heal. Yet, through Art's dedication and guidance, over 90% of the veterans he works with have agreed to engage in evidence-based trauma therapy.



**Art Williams**  
Peer Support  
Specialist

“  
**Peer Support  
at AEU: A  
Lifeline for  
Veterans in  
the Justice  
System**

# At Ease Wellness

## ➔ Trauma Informed Yoga

At Ease USA offers trauma-informed yoga classes in Omaha and Lincoln, providing veterans, service members, and their families with a holistic approach to healing. Led by experienced instructors, yoga promotes mindfulness, emotional regulation, and builds resilience.

## ➔ Equine Therapy Partnership

Through our partnership with Take Flight Farms, clients participate in equine-assisted therapy. This unique program harnesses the therapeutic power of working with horses to promote emotional regulation, build trust, and reduce stress in a safe and supportive environment.

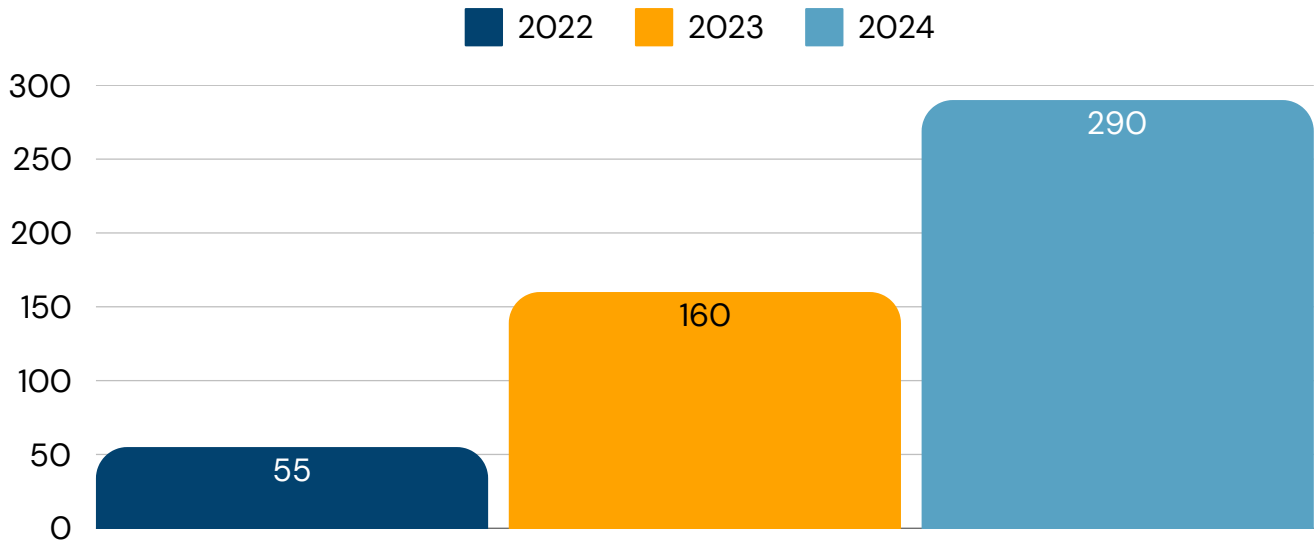
## ➔ Mountain Trail Biking

AEU offered mountain trail biking experiences for veterans and service members, promoting physical activity, camaraderie, and mental well-being. These guided rides provide a healthy outlet for stress relief, build confidence, and foster a sense of community among participants.

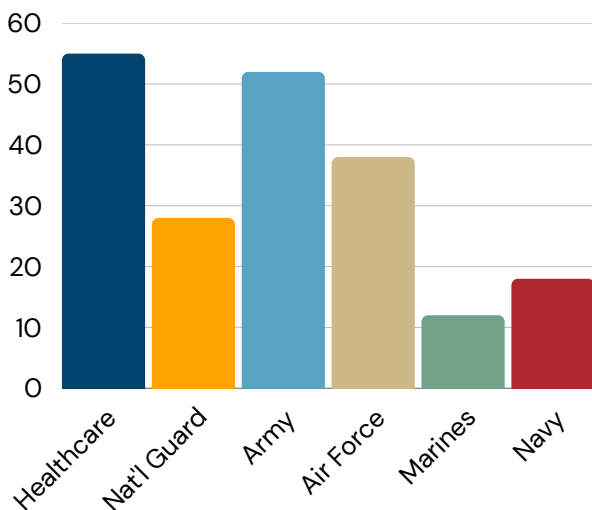
# By the Numbers

In 2023, the number of clients we served grew by an impressive 191%. In 2024, we built on that momentum, achieving an additional 80% increase compared to the previous year.

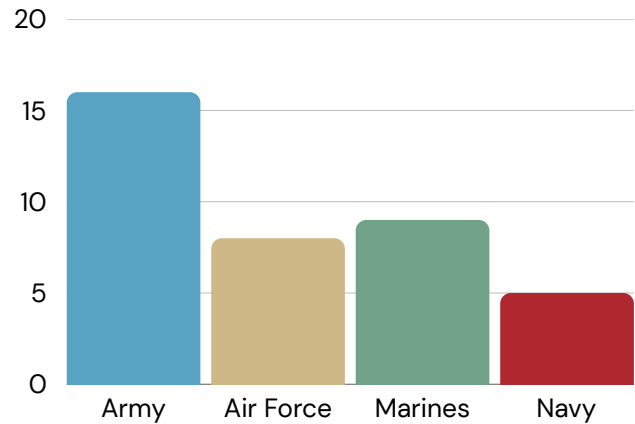
## Total Number Served



## Therapy: Branch Affiliation



## Peer Support: Branch Affiliation



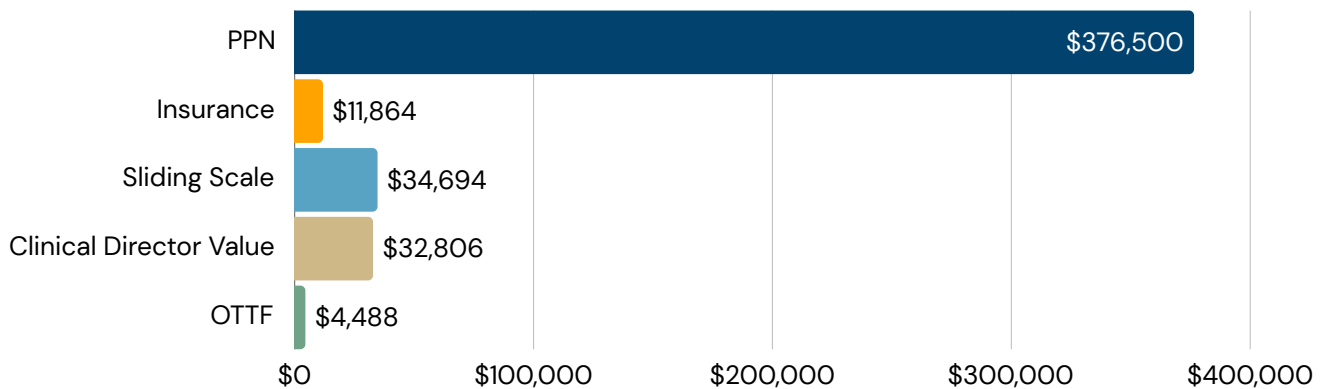
Approximately 25% of those served were family members.



# By the Numbers

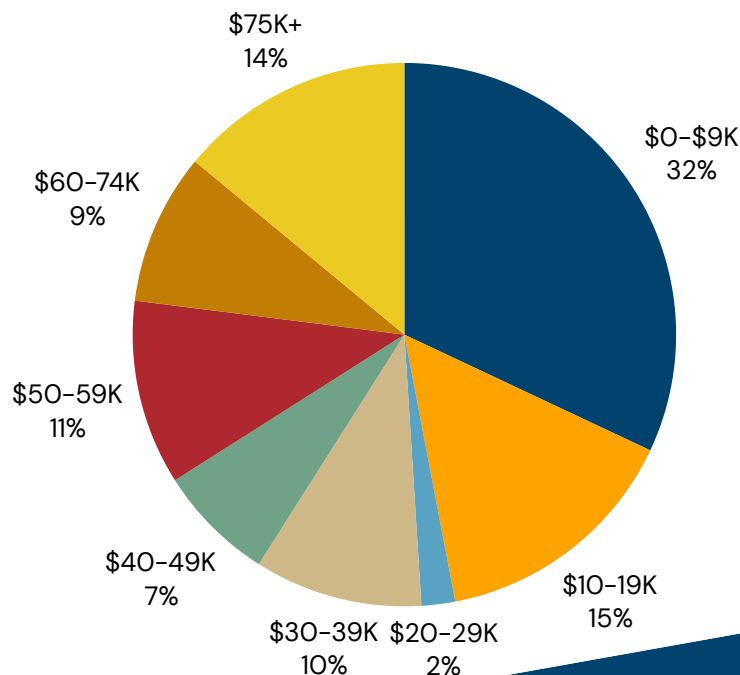
AEU saw a 69.7% increase in sliding scale fee income. Our fee structure is based on client income, ensuring affordability with session costs ranging from \$1 to a maximum of \$50 per session.

## Therapy Financials



## Therapy Clients: Income Levels

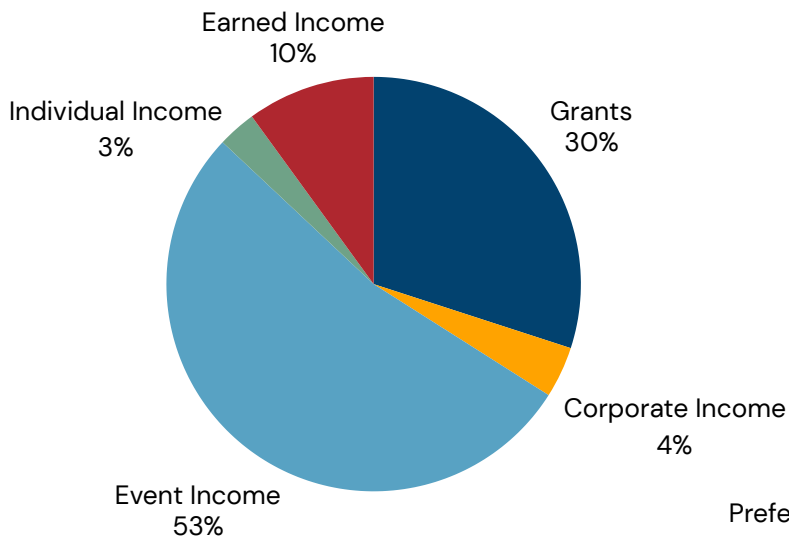
77% of clients reported an income below \$60,000 and 49% of those reported income below \$29,000



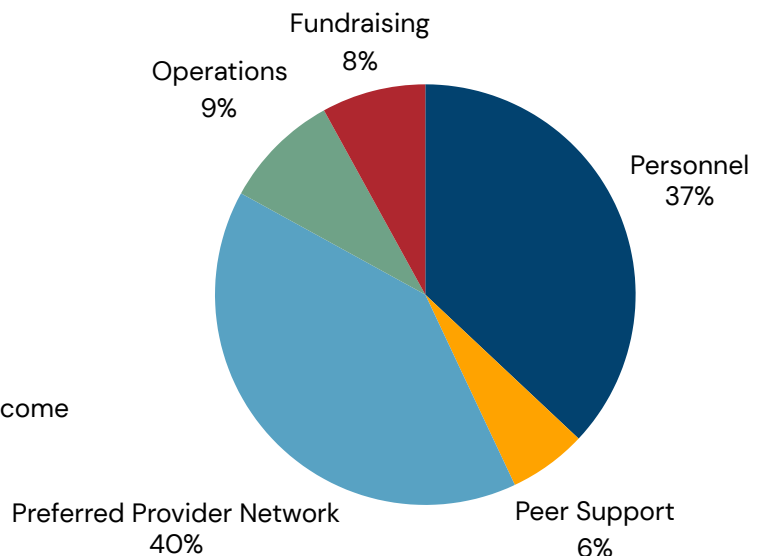
# By the Numbers

At Ease USA experienced a record-breaking fundraising year, thanks in large part to the incredible success of our annual luncheon. This vital support allows us to continue expanding our services to those in need. In late 2024, we launched AEU wellness programming, and look forward to growing these initiatives in 2025. Therapy services remain at the core of our mission, accounting for 40% of our annual budget—a testament to the increasing demand for mental health support. Thank you for helping us make a lasting impact!

## At Ease USA Income



## At Ease USA Expenses



# Client Testimonials



"I think it makes access to mental health services super affordable. I appreciate how everything is easy to navigate: sliding scale based on income, less complicated than dealing with insurance and I don't have to decide if I'm paying for meds this month or mental health help."



"This experience has been nothing short of life changing so far. The trauma focused work Shane and I are doing is something I've needed for a long time. I am feeling like I have a renewed hope in my ability to cope and recover from clinical challenges that I will face for the rest of my life. Shane's expertise, in conjunction with his trauma-focused approach, is exactly what I've needed."



"Gave me better understanding of my emotions and allowed me to work through those emotions from trauma. It helped me to have hope, feel connected, and see a light at the end of the tunnel. Mostly I learned that it's ok to not be ok. EMDR was a gamechanger for me!"



"Michelle (preferred provider) has been great to work with. Life with a veteran is hard and it's hard to find someone to talk to. Being able to talk to Michelle has really made my life less stressful and helped me work on communication with my husband."





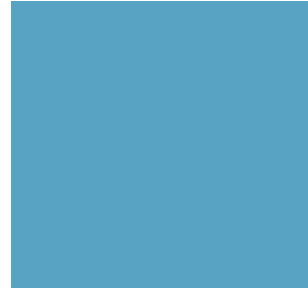
# At Ease Outreach

➔ Forge Ahead 5k

➔ Annual Benefit Luncheon

➔ Salute to Service

AEU participated in over 66 community events to support veteran causes!






# Contact Us

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