



VETS HELPING VETS SINCE 1974

## Nominate Swords to Plowshares for Cy Pres Awards

*The doctrine of cy pres allows a judge to award funds from class action settlements or judgments that cannot be distributed to the class members or intended beneficiaries to a charitable nonprofit organization under Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 384, and applicable federal law.*

As a nonprofit organization that provides free legal services in addition to wraparound support services for homeless and low-income veterans, Swords to Plowshares is eligible to receive nominations and awards for cy pres funding.

Swords to Plowshares has a demonstrated record of helping veterans overcome barriers to health, stability, and a successful transition from military service since its founding in 1974. Our mission is *to heal the wounds of war, to restore dignity, hope and self-sufficiency to all veterans in need, and to prevent and end homelessness and poverty among veterans.* Our vision is that all veterans will have access to the care and services they need to rebuild their lives.

Swords to Plowshares is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization providing comprehensive holistic supportive services, including free legal services in veterans' benefits and discharge upgrade cases for homeless and low-income San Francisco Bay Area veterans. With over 40 years of experience, we have learned that the challenges facing veterans – including service-related disabilities, homelessness and substance abuse – are interrelated and require an integrated system of support. Cy pres awards are vital funding allowing us to provide veterans with the specific services they need to avoid and escape poverty and homelessness.

Swords to Plowshares works in a number of different areas, which provide a range of potential cases for which Swords to Plowshares would be an appropriate cy pres award recipient. **The following areas in which we work are the most likely to be related to class interests:**

**Access to Legal Services:** We are one of the few organizations in the country to provide free attorney representation to help veterans gain eligibility and access to the health care and disability compensation benefits they have earned from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are the only one to offer these services within a complete continuum of supportive care.

**Persons with Disabilities:** The legal team at Swords to Plowshares represents veterans with their VA service-connected disability benefits applications. These benefits provide veterans with disabilities the necessary income and VA health care to become stable, healthy, and housed in the Bay Area.

**Housing and Homelessness:** We house homeless veterans with disabilities in our supportive housing programs. Through eviction prevention, rapid re-housing and other supportive services, we help veterans prevent and overcome homelessness. Lastly, we represent veterans in Discharge Upgrade proceedings at the Department of Defense which, when successful, removes barriers to eligibility for VA housing and other benefits.

**Crime Victim Assistance:** Our attorneys represent victims of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) in their VA service-connected disability compensation claims for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). We assist veterans who experienced sexual assault or rape in the service in navigating the complex administrative processes to obtain their disability compensation, health care, and other VA services.

**Veteran Supportive Services:** We help veterans gain stability through case management, mental health assessments and basic needs assistance (such as emergency housing, food vouchers, applications for housing, and representative payee services). For veterans ineligible or waiting for VA benefits, we help increase income and access to healthcare through applications for public benefits such as SSI and SSDI.

**Employment and Economic Security:** Our employment and job training services help low-income veterans to obtain civilian careers and achieve long-term financial security.

For further information about why Swords to Plowshares would be a proper cy pres recipient in your case, please contact Colleen Corliss, Development and Communications Director, at (415) 655-7248 or [ccorliss@stp-sf.org](mailto:ccorliss@stp-sf.org).