

Creative Appalachian Mountain Opportunities Retreats

The Creative Appalachian Mountain Opportunities (CAMO) Retreat takes advantage of our rural area's best assets to create mindful experiences for our Veteran community. The breathtaking natural beauty of these mountains and the people who have dedicated their lives to turning their talents towards craft, combine to offer a restorative get-away from daily stressors.

Located on a 500-acre nature preserve, the Yew Mountain Center, partnered with the Pocahontas County Artisan's Cooperative has created a menu of restorative arts retreats. Veterans can work several hours a day with an artisan to learn a craft and create a project while they and their families stay at the Yew Mountain Center, a comfortable, rustic lodge. In their free time, participants can recreate on the property with miles of trails, ponds for fishing and canoeing, gardens, and a medicinal forest farm. We believe that such a setting has healing power in and of itself, and when combined with the wellness benefits of the arts, has the power to create pathways for transformation for people potentially affected by trauma and high stress environments.

The CAMO Retreat Team has created a general retreat schedule that can be customized to suit the needs of each participant. The retreat offerings include Pottery/Ceramics, Leatherworking, Woodworking, and Appalachian Broom Making. In some cases, family members may be able to participate. In other cases, they will be engaged in alternative crafts at the center and activities on the land. Veterans could use this experience to connect with their families, take time away from daily stressors, or as an opportunity to break out of harmful habits.

This is our pilot year of offering the CAMO retreats thanks to a grant from the Mid America Arts Alliance and other generous sponsors. The cost of lodging, most meals, instruction, and supplies are included in the scholarship awarded to applicants selected for the retreats. Cost to the participants include travel expenses and a \$50 fee to reserve the retreat space. This fee will be refunded once the candidate attends the retreat.

Veterans themselves or anyone knowing a deserving Veteran can apply. Participants will be selected on a rolling basis. Retreats will begin in the fall of 2024 and resume in the spring of 2025. The priority deadline for applications is September 20, 2024, but we will accept applications beyond that date until retreats are filled. The artisan workshops are one-on-one, hands-on instruction with an experienced teaching artist. We will work with successful applicants, the teachers, and the Yew Mountain Center to schedule the retreats.

In addition to participants, we are seeking additional sponsors to grow the impact of this project. Please [contact us](#) to talk more about sponsorship opportunities. We hope to continue and expand the program into the future. Thanks for your interest in being a part of the beginning of this exciting project!



9494 Lobelia Rd. Hillsboro, WV 24946

C.A.M.O. Application

This form may be filled out by a Veteran applying for a retreat or by someone who is nominating a Veteran for a retreat. The selection committee will follow up with a phone interview. The Veteran must supply a DD 214 form (redacted SSN) to verify their Veteran status. This application should be returned to 9494 Lobelia Rd. Hillsboro, WV 24946 or scanned to info.yewmountain@gmail.com

Veteran's Name _____

Best Phone # _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

ONLY FILL IN THIS SECTION IF YOU ARE NOMINATING A VETERAN

Name of person Nominating _____

Best Phone # _____ Email _____

Does the Veteran know that you are nominating him or her? _____

Which season is preferred for the retreat?

Select the top 2 choices for retreat focus:

FALL

Appalachian hand-tied broom making

SPRING

Leather Working

EITHER ONE

Wood Turning

Ceramics/Pottery

PLEASE ANSWER ON A SEPARATE PAGE

1. In what ways do you think an arts and nature retreat will benefit the Veteran (and family if applicable)?
2. Are there ways that participation in a CAMO retreat will benefit the Veteran's community? (Optional)
3. Briefly summarize the Veteran's participation in the military.
4. What are/were the Veteran's dates of service? (Can be approximate if nominating someone.)
5. What is the characterization of the Veteran's discharge if applicable. Note extenuating circumstances if applicable.
6. Would the Veteran bring family members to the retreat? If so, please describe (#, ages of children...)
7. Does the Veteran have accessibility concerns or special health needs that our staff should be aware of to best support the retreat experience?
8. Is there anything else you would like us to know about the applicant? (Optional)
9. How did you hear about the C.A.M.O. Retreat opportunity?