

VetSuccess AmeriCorps Grant Competition

Q&A

Q. Is this competition open to both state commission subgrantees and national direct grantees?

A. Yes. All 2013 AmeriCorps grantees are eligible to apply.

Q. What is the VSOC Program?

A. VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) is a program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) designed to help Veteran-Students make the transition to college life. Through the VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program, the VA strengthens partnerships with institutions of higher learning and creates opportunities to help Veteran-Students achieve success by providing outreach and transition services to the general Veteran-Students population during their transition from military to college life. The VSOC program provides a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VSOC Counselor) assigned to each VSOC school to provide vocational testing and career, academic, and adjustment counseling services. There is also a VA Vet Center Outreach Coordinator, co-located on many campuses, to provide peer-to-peer counseling and referral services.

Q: What is a VSOC Counselor, and how would members interact with them?

A: A VSOC Counselor is an education and benefits counselor, trained by the Department of Veteran Affairs. At least one counselor is assigned to each of the 32 Campuses to provide support to the university and the Veteran-Student population. The AmeriCorps member will coordinate campus based support with the VSOC counselor to expand the capacity of the program to reach more Veteran-Students on each of the campuses and to report on engagement activities.

Q. Do I have to place members at one of these 32 campuses?

A. Yes. Your proposal must be for two members on one or more of the 32 campus sites identified in the *Notice*.

Q. May I place members on other campuses in addition to the 32 listed in the *Notice*?

A. No.

Q. What kind of local support can we expect?

A. Because VA already has an existing relationship with these 32 campuses, you can expect that the VSOC counselor will facilitate introductions with the campus, so that your program can work with the university to access resources that will assist the members in their outreach activities. In addition, VSOC counselors assigned to support your selected campuses will liaise directly with the AmeriCorps members at the beginning of the program to provide training and to establish and define expectations at the local level.

Q. Can I use other terms of service besides full time?

A. Full time member positions are preferred. Part-time placements will be considered.

Q. How long should the member serve?

A. Ideally, all members will serve the full academic year.

Q. Must I recruit Veterans as members to support this initiative?

A. It is strongly encouraged, and your application will be evaluated on how well you can demonstrate your ability to recruit and place AmeriCorps members that are Veterans and/or Military Family members.

Q. The *Notice* indicates that additional data reporting (beyond the bi-annual progress reports) may be required. What will we be expected to report?

A. In addition to the required progress reports, the assigned VSOC counselor will request that the AmeriCorps members report certain locally defined activity in support of the VSOC program. That information will be defined between the AmeriCorps grantee, the AmeriCorps members, and the VSOC counselor to support each of their own respective needs. VSOC counselors have a standard reporting form and can provide onsite training and orientation to the member once they are placed on campus.

Q. Must we have a physical location secured on the campus prior to applying?

A. No. Once your grant or subgrant is awarded, the VSOC counselor assigned to your campus will assist you in working with the local campus, however the grantee is responsible for ensuring appropriate space and logistical support for the AmeriCorps members. Your grant application will be assessed on how well you articulate your capacity to deploy, monitor and support members on the campuses cited.

Q. How did the VA select the campuses listed in Attachment A?

A. The VA identified campuses based on the size of the veteran population on campuses and the workload of the VSOC Counselors at the locations. Each identified campus has approximately 800-1200 Veteran-Students.

Q. May I apply for a fixed amount or EAP VetSuccess AmeriCorps grant?

A. No. This opportunity is offered as a cost reimbursement grant only.

Q. Will this be a separate grant or will the funds be added to my existing AmeriCorps grant?

A. It must be a separate grant because CNCS must report on the performance measures and expenditures separately to the VA. Grantees will have to account for the funds separately in their accounting systems as well as track performance measures separately.

Q. May a state commission apply for a VetSuccess grant?

A. State commissions may not directly carry out AmeriCorps programs, and therefore are not eligible to apply.

Q. What are the member benefits? Does the Presidential Volunteer Service Award affect other member benefits?

A. Member benefits are the same as for other AmeriCorps programs. Members may receive a living stipend during service, may qualify for health insurance and child care benefits, and, at the end of their term of service, may receive a Segal Education Award. Additionally, VetSuccess members may be eligible to receive the President's Volunteer Service Award which is a way to recognize a lifetime commitment to serving our country through military and civilian service.

Q. May existing AmeriCorps programs that currently do not have a relationship with any identified campus apply for a VetSuccess grant?

A. Yes.

Q. What match percentage must I meet in my VetSuccess application?

A. If, under 45CFR § 2522.340, the VetSuccess program is different from your current AmeriCorps program, then your match requirement is 24%. If VetSuccess is the same as your current program, then your match requirement is the same as your 2013 required percentage.

Q. Will the selected campuses provide match for this grant?

A. Applicants may discuss match with college or university staff, however no such arrangements have been made by CNCS or the VA.