

**SOLICITATION FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS
VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE
STATE GRANTS**

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SOLICITATION FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

I. PURPOSE OF THIS SOLICITATION

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), is requesting grant applications to be submitted for the operation of grant programs in accordance with Title 38, Chapter 41 of the United States Code (38 U.S.C. 41) as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA), Public Law (P.L.) 107-288.

II. BACKGROUND

Funds under this Solicitation are being made available to compliment the service delivery system in the provision of services to veterans by providing for; disabled veterans' outreach program (DVOP) specialists and local veterans' employment representative (LVER) staff.

A State shall submit a plan that describes the manner in which the State shall furnish employment, training, and placement services required under Chapter 41 of Title 38 for the program year, including a description of:

- Duties assigned by the State to disabled veterans' outreach program (DVOP) specialists and local veterans' employment representative (LVER) staff;
- The manner in which the DVOP and LVER staff are integrated into the employment service delivery system;
- How the State will use 1% of the formula level of funding for incentives;
- The designation of special populations of veterans to be served; and,
- How veterans' priority is applied and integrated by the SWA into the Public Labor Exchange workforce delivery system;
- Services to veterans provided by the SWA public labor exchange exclusive of those provided by DVOP's and LVER's;
- The manner Transitioning Service members and their spouses will be identified and served;
- Veterans' performance goals and their anticipated outcomes;
- Linkages to service providers and employers in optimizing the employment and training opportunities to veterans
- Additional information as the Secretary may require.

States will be given a set allocation from which they will develop their State Grant Plan. Each State will be provided funds in direct proportion to the number of veterans seeking employment within their State as compared to the number of veterans seeking employment nationwide. The allocation will go to the State in one funding stream as a program grant and will then be divided at the State level through separate accounting programs.

The DVOP and LVER programs give the State the flexibility to determine the most effective and efficient distribution of their staff resources based upon the distinct roles and

responsibilities of each of the two positions. Each State's allocation for Fiscal Year 2005 and amounts for each subsequent year will be subject to available funding. The State's submission will include a combined program and budget narrative, a Standard Form (SF) 424 and an SF 424A with budget back-up information that projects quarterly program costs as described in Section IV below.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applications for funds under this solicitation will be accepted only from the designated administrative entity that operates the employment service delivery system within the State.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

These State Grants are offered non-competitively. Applicants are advised that their submissions must meet and comply with the requirements established throughout this Solicitation; all provisions of Title 38, Chapters 41 and 42 (per 38 U.S.C. 4102A); and, any provisions set forth by the Grant Officer in the grant award or subsequent approvals for grant modifications.

To facilitate the submission of an acceptable application, each State is requested to submit a draft application to the Director for Veterans' Employment and Training for review on or before the close of business on Tuesday, June 1, 2004. The final application will be electronically submitted to the Director for Veterans' Employment and Training by close of business on July 1, 2004 along with an original signed Transmittal Letter SF 424 and Certification Signature page.

A. Transmittal Letter (original and electronic)- The Transmittal Letter must indicate that the individual whose name appears on the SF 424 and Certification Signature page is authorized to enter into the agreement with the USDOL. It must also provide an assurance that the State will comply with Chapter 41 of 38 U.S.C. and will use the funds allocated to support as many DVOP and LVER full and half-time positions as "appropriate and efficient to carry out the services under this Chapter."

B. SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance – Enclosure 3a (original and electronic) - The final amount to be entered on line 15 g. of the SF-424, taken from the SF 424A and budget back-up worksheets should be rounded to the thousand dollars. The amount requested on line 15a must not exceed the funds shown in Enclosure 1. On line 15e, enter the amount being requested for TAP workshops and/or those special initiatives previously approved by the ASVET. The amount requested on line 15g will reflect the total amount of funds requested by the State for FY 2005 rounded to the thousand dollars. Please note that quarterly obligation authority to States during the grant period can only be made in thousands, rather than hundreds of dollars.

The SF 424 must indicate compliance with Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 in block 16. These grants are covered under E.O. 12372.

NOTE: Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," was issued with the desire to foster the intergovernmental partnerships and strengthen federalism by relying on State and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The order allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function.

Enclosure 3e includes a list of those States with a Clearing House and/or a designated Single Point of Contact and their current addresses. The most current list may be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>. If the State has not selected these grants for review, enter "N/A" on the date line.

Line 18 of the SF 424 must contain an original signature and the date signed. (Refer to Enclosure 3a for instructions and an example.)

C. SF 424A, Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (electronic) - The SF 424A must be submitted and completed in accordance with the applicable instructions. Refer to Enclosure 3b and 3c.

D. Budget Backup Information (electronic) - The State may choose to submit the required information in any format. This back-up information is required to be submitted with the SF 424A for all operating programs in the level of detail described in Enclosure 3c. Financial Planning and Reporting Worksheets were developed to automatically calculate staffing and funding information. These worksheets and instructions are included as Enclosure 3d and are also available for download at: <http://nvti.cudenver.edu/Implementation/Default.htm>

E. Plan Narrative (electronic) - The State Grant Plan is a narrative that will include program and fiscal information. It should describe in sufficient detail the intended use of the grant funds in the provision of services to veterans, including the number of full-time and half-time DVOP and LVER staff that the State determines the total grant funds will support. In accordance with VPL 04-04 the Plan will also address the SWA's veterans' performance goals and their expected outcomes for the public labor exchange delivery system and for the DVOP and LVER programs respectively. Complete narratives should not exceed ten pages in length and should follow the format provided in Enclosure 4.

F. DVOP and LVER Staffing Directory (electronic) – A list or directory showing the work locations at which DVOP and LVER staff will be assigned (including central and sub-State offices) must be submitted with the application. A suggested format is included in Enclosure 5.

States may choose to prepare separate directories for DVOP specialists and LVER staff. The list or directory must distinguish whether each DVOP/LVER staff is assigned as a full-time or half-time employee. The level of productive service coordination achieved through the continued effective use of alternative work locations is encouraged, although a specific amount of outstation time is no longer required for DVOP specialists.

NOTE: The requirement to identify all work sites/locations for the Tobacco-Free and Drug-Free Workplace assurance is satisfied by submission of a DVOP/LVER staff list or directory in the manner specified in subparagraph IV. F above.

G. Assurance/Certification Signature Page (original and electronic) - Assurances and Certifications found in Enclosures 6a – 6e, are to be reviewed prior to signing the Signature Page (Enclosure 6f). An authorized signature on the Certification Signature Page will satisfy all assurances/certification requirements in Enclosure 6.

V. GRANT PERIOD, STANDARDS, FUNDING AND STAFFING

A. Grant Period and Standards of Performance - The new grants to be awarded under this solicitation will span a period of five years, unless otherwise affected. Amounts will be awarded annually through grant modification, based upon enacted appropriation laws. States will be required to provide quarterly activity, fiscal and performance reports. States are accountable for compliance with any standards of performance developed and issued by the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET).

State Workforce Agencies are expected to develop goals and strategies that are consistent with Departmental performance goals for veterans employment and retention. Refer to Enclosure 4 and VPL 04-04 for more detail regarding the incorporation of these employment and retention goals into the State's Plan.

B. Funding - Approximately \$160 million will be available for the Fiscal Year 2005 (October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005) State Grants to support programs and activities authorized by the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002. Enclosure 1 contains each State's combined DVOP and LVER preliminary funding estimates for FY2005, excluding any amounts for TAP or special initiatives. These figures will be used for planning purposes until funds based on Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) data projections become available in May 2004. These will be sent under separate cover. The formula and funding criteria for SWA's will be announced through a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM). One percent of this allocation is required under the Jobs for Veterans' Act to be used for Incentive Awards as described in VPL 08-03, dated May 29, 2003. Federal Government obligations and future year funding are contingent upon the availability of continued authorization and appropriations. If, in any year, a timely appropriation is not enacted into law, or as funding exigencies require, the USDOL reserves the right, upon proper notice to the grantee, to unilaterally adjust the grant amounts to reflect the actual amounts appropriated. If SWAs fail to expend their funding in accordance with their approved Jobs For Veterans State Plan, the Regional Administrators for Veterans' Employment and Training may periodically adjust a State's funds for re-allocation.

C. Staffing - The Jobs for Veteran's Grant is a program grant that provides funding to maintain an appropriate staffing level that will provide efficient and effective services to eligible veterans and employers. If, during any annual funding cycle (October 1 - September 30), conditions in a State necessitate adjustments in staff utilization or funding levels which support staff, approval must be obtained from the Grant Officer for these changes through the grant modification process described in the Special Grant provisions (See Enclosure 8).

VI. DVOP/LVER STAFF ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Special Provisions for DVOP specialists and LVER staff identify the conditions of appointment/assignment, service priorities and work/duties as required in Title 38, Chapters 41 and 42 and the most current Veterans' Program Letters on these subjects.

A. Staff Services - This grant provides funds to exclusively serve veterans, other eligible persons, transitioning service members and their spouses and, indirectly, employers. States will not assign DVOP and LVER funded staff to functions that violate Title 38 or grant provisions in which non-veterans who seek assistance will request and expect to receive services. Jobs For Veterans State Plans must demonstrate that staff resources will be assigned and used in the most appropriate and effective way to meet the employment and training needs of eligible veterans. States are encouraged to assign Grant funded staff to support Department of Veterans' Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program offices, military sites for Transition Assistance Program facilitation, and other approved locations.

B. Responsibilities - DVOP specialists and LVER staff perform special, but separate, functions in the provision of services to veterans. DVOP and LVER staff are assigned to assist, not supplant, other State Workforce Agency staff in their efforts to provide labor exchange services to veterans. DVOP and LVER staff may provide services to all veterans that Title 38 indicates are eligible for their services, but their efforts should be concentrated, **according to their respective roles and responsibilities**, on outreach and the provision and facilitation of direct client services to those who have been identified as most in need of intensive employment and training assistance. DVOP and LVER staff, through outreach with employers, should develop increased hiring opportunities within the local work force by raising the awareness of employers of the availability and the benefit of hiring veterans. In order to meet the specific needs of veterans, particularly veterans with barriers to employment, DVOP and LVER staff must be thoroughly familiar with the full range of job development services and training programs available at the State Workforce Agency One-Stop Career Centers and Department of Veterans' Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program locations.

1. The functions of DVOP specialists are to provide intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled veterans and other eligible veterans, with the maximum emphasis directed toward serving those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, including homeless veterans, and veterans with barriers to employment. DVOP specialists will be actively involved in outreach efforts to increase program participation among those with the greatest barriers to employment which may include but should not be limited to: outplacement in Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program offices; DVA Medical Centers; routine site visits to Veterans' Service Organization meetings; Native American Territories; Military installations; and, other areas of known concentrations of veterans or transitioning service members. The case management approach, taught by the National Veterans' Training Institute, is generally accepted as the method to use when providing vocational guidance or related services to eligible veterans identified as needing intensive services.

2. The functions of LVER staff are to conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans, encourage the hiring of disabled veterans, build staff capacity in the provision of services to veterans and generally assist veterans gain and retain employment. LVER staff will conduct seminars for employers and job search workshops for veterans seeking employment, and will facilitate priority of service in regard to employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans by all staff of the employment service delivery system. LVER position(s) allocated to a State may be assigned as State coordinator(s) to provide functional supervision over the States' veterans programs. Costs associated with such position(s) may be charged directly to the grant.

VII. SERVICE PRIORITIES

Priority of Service is provided for services under this grant in the following order:

1. Service-connected disabled veterans;
2. Veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge or expeditionary medal has been authorized;
3. Recently separated veterans;
4. Other eligible veterans;
5. Eligible spouses.

States may identify and designate other eligible veterans as priority populations, taking into account their rates of unemployment and other employment emphases in law. Such State-identified special populations may include Native American veterans, incarcerated veterans, or other populations of veterans who may have higher rates of unemployment within the State. States may also identify any other veterans who might require a more complex mix of services in order for them to successfully reintegrate into the civilian workforce. Refer to Enclosure 4 for more detail regarding the incorporation of these priorities into a State's plan.

A brief description of programs designed to facilitate the employment of populations identified above and other veterans in need of labor exchange assistance include:

A. Transition Assistance Program Workshops - States, through a Memorandum of Understanding with all concerned parties, are expected to provide required operational and administrative support. Only after successful completion of Facilitator Training at the National Veterans' Training Institute are staff authorized to facilitate TAP workshops. Facilitated services through TAP workshops may be provided up to twelve months prior to regular separation for military members and their spouses and up to twenty-four months prior to separation for military retirees and their spouses. These program activities are normally conducted at separation centers on military installations but may be held at other locations. Disabled Transition Assistance Programs are made available at some transition assistance sites and military hospitals designated as separating centers for service members who may be receiving medical discharges.

B. Intensive Services - Previously identified national emphasis populations can best be served using a case management approach for the delivery of intensive, mediated services. DVOP specialists, trained by the National Veterans' Training Institute, can provide intensive employability development, networking, referral and follow-up for veterans identified for such services up to and after each veteran achieves his/her career objectives. Following through on assistance after a veteran enters employment can increase the potential for employment retention. Although such a focus is labor intensive, it should be emphasized and encouraged. Therefore, the number of veterans who enter employment following case management is a valued measure of performance, and retention in employment can best be achieved through successful case management and follow-through.

VIII. ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

Once approved by the Assistant Secretary, cost projections and fiscal plans become the basis for quarterly spending during each year. Cost projections should reflect three separate categories of activity: DVOP Activities, LVER Activities, and Transition Assistance Program Activities (if applicable). Costs in each Grant Activity are divided among standard object class categories: Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies and Other. The "Other category" (SF 424A Line 6h.) includes program related staff training, Performance Awards and Incentives, applicable Special Initiatives, and any approved miscellaneous costs.

The Cognizant Federal Agency, generally the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Cost Determination, approves the indirect cost rate(s) and applicable allocation base(s) for each State Workforce Agency receiving grant funds. Indirect costs are chargeable to the applicable Grant Activity within the State grant plan, as defined in each State's cost allocation plan(s) or one or more approved indirect cost rate proposals (OMB Circular A-87).

Indirect costs are generally defined to include (a) certain central costs originating in the State's department or the agency that operates the State grant, and separately, (b) the costs of the State's central governmental services, furnished, but not directly billed, to the agency operating the State grant. Though not direct costs under DVOP, LVER or TAP categories, these indirect costs are to be identified within the State Grant Plan.

For all costs associated with the State grants, four general rules apply:

The same cost entries cannot be recorded in more than one Grant Activity. This avoids duplicate charges. For example, the costs for LVER hours spent on TAP workshops must be recorded only as TAP Grant Activity costs and may not also be entered as "LVER Activities" Grant Activity costs.

Costs not assignable to the TAP Grant Activity, yet not clearly identifiable as DVOP-related and/or LVER-related, must be charged to either "DVOP Activities," or "LVER Activities," or some combination of these two Grant Activity categories;

Incentive Award costs are charged in any proportion between the DVOP and LVER activities to include those award costs associated with “All individuals other than DVOP and or LVER staff”; and

Approved planned costs cannot be shifted either from one Object Class Category to another, or from one Grant Activity to another without grant modification.

IX. APPLICABLE REGULATORY REFERENCES

The statutory references contained in Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 U.S.C. and contained in 20 CFR, Part 1001, apply. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87 “Cost Principles for State and Local Governments” and the following administrative regulatory provisions incorporated in special grant provisions by reference also apply, including:

- 29 CFR, Part 96. Federal Standards for Audit of Federally Funded Grants, Contracts and Agreements
- 29 CFR, Part 97. Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments
- 29 CFR, Part 31 and 32. Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted programs of the Department of Labor, Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964; and Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance

X. ENCLOSURES

1. Formula Funding Levels by State

2. Definitions

- a. Common Acronyms
- b. Glossary of Terms

3. Forms and Instructions

- a. SF 424 Form, Instructions and Completed Sample
- b. SF 424A, Form
- c. SF 424A and Grant Financial Planning and Reporting Worksheet Instructions
- d. Grant Financial Planning and Reporting Worksheets
- e. Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Directory

4. State Grant Plan Narrative Instructions

5. DVOP/LVER Staffing

6. Directory Assurances and Certifications

- a. Grant Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
- b. Drug-Free/Tobacco-Free Workplace Certification
- c. Debarment, Suspension and other Responsibility Matters with Instructions
- d. Certification Regarding Lobbying Activities
- e. Release of (Grantee) Information Certification
- f. Assurances/Certification Signature Page

7. Planned TAP Workshops

8. Special Grant Provisions (Draft)

9. General Grant Provisions