

Date: DEC - 4 2012

From: Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (006)

Subj: Workforce Recruitment Program Funding for Fiscal Year 2013 (VAIQ #7306158)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) remains committed to increasing the employment of individuals with disabilities, including disabled Veterans and individuals with targeted disabilities. As part of our continuing efforts to employ qualified individuals with disabilities and meet the Secretary's three percent goal for hiring individuals with targeted disabilities, VA's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has established a centralized fund to hire summer interns with disabilities through the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). The goal of the fund is to minimize funding barriers that may prevent full utilization of the WRP.

2. The WRP provides Federal job opportunities for college students with disabilities, some of whom are Veterans, and is coordinated annually by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the U.S. Department of Defense. The WRP is an excellent recruitment and workforce succession tool that can be used to identify qualified candidates to fill temporary or permanent staffing needs in a variety of occupations. WRP recruiters interviewed more than 2000 students and developed a database listing the qualifications of each student. In 2012, six of these recruiters were VA staff.

3. ODI will administer the centralized fund and will approve reimbursement funding on a first come, first serve basis. Priority consideration will be given to offices that have identified a position to which the intern can be converted once the internship ends. **Your funding application must be submitted to ODI no later than Friday, March 15, 2013** (attached). To improve your chances of receiving centralized funds for an intern, I recommend that you promptly request access to the WRP site and identify viable candidate(s). The list of prescreened candidates will be available approximately December 4, 2012. Detailed instructions are attached and available on VA's Disability Program Web site at: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#WRP>.

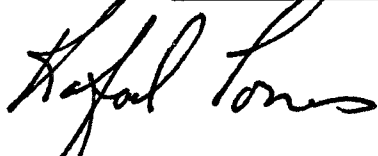
4. Organizations interested in hiring a WRP using their own funding can visit the WRP secure Web site at: www.wrp.gov and request a password to access the intern database to identify and recruit an intern. For record keeping purposes, please advise ODI when you hired an intern through the WRP. Also, please review "Step Seven" on the attached "Step-by-step Instructions for Centralized Funding" for pertinent reasonable accommodation information.

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5. I strongly encourage you to use the WRP to hire qualified individuals with disabilities, to further our goal of developing a high performing, diverse workforce and to support our efforts to make VA the best Federal employer for individuals with disabilities.

6. If you have any questions regarding the general WRP, WRP centralized fund, please contact Aurelia Waters, WRP Fund Coordinator, ODI, at (202) 461-4124 or via e-mail at: Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rafael Torres". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name below.

Rafael A. Torres, Acting

Attachments

**FY 2013 Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)
Step-by-step Instructions for Centralized Funding**

To ensure funding availability before you proceed, please contact Aurelia Waters, WRP Fund Coordinator, at (202) 461-4124 or via email at: Aurelia.Waters@va.gov

Step One: Hiring Officials should identify a classified position, in a suitable job series, ranging from GS 5-11. Managers should coordinate with their respective Human Resources Office (HRO) and identify a place in their organization for the intern to work the 10-14 week internship.

Step Two: Hiring officials can log on to the WRP Web site at: <https://wrp.gov>. Once registered, you should receive a password within 48 hours. With your password, you should be able to search by location, job preference, and academic degree. Do not be discouraged if you do not find an individual who lives in your area. Most of the students are willing to travel for the right internship. WRP interns are responsible for any relocation, transportation, and/or travel expenses. Print the **Student Information Sheet** for all potential candidates whom you are considering. Please note: Hiring officials may receive assistance with this step from the facility's EEO manager, selective placement coordinator, and/or Disability Program Manager.

Step Three: Once you have identified one or more potential candidates who may be qualified for the position, schedule and conduct 30 minute phone interviews (optional). Hiring officials are advised to focus on the qualifications of the candidates. Questions designed to elicit information about the disability are not permitted by law.

Step Four: Forward to your local servicing HRO the desired candidate's **Student Information Sheet and resume**. Your local HRO will determine whether the individual(s) qualify for the pre-identified position and at what grade level. Occasionally, a staffing specialist may need additional documentation from the student. If so, call the potential candidate and have them provide the additional information directly to the staffing specialist.

Step Five: To apply for **centralized funding** to cover the salary of your WRP candidate, you must submit the "WRP Reimbursement Request" form to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion via an e-mail to Aurelia Waters (Aurelia.Waters@va.gov). Forms and instructions can be obtained at:
<http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#WRP>.

Step Six: If you are using **centralized funding**, you can make the offer to the student once funding is confirmed by ODI. Instruct your servicing HRO to note on the SF-50 and SF-52 the approved specified temporary appointment of the internship, under section "u" of the **Schedule A (5 C.F.R. 213.3102(u))** Special Hiring Authority, and use the **PAID code W9R**. The Schedule A excepted appointment authority is described on the Disability Program Web site at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx>.

**FY 2013 Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)
Step-by-step Instructions for Centralized Funding**

Step Seven: Once the candidate has accepted, closely review the accommodation notes section of the **Student Information Sheet**, which will give an idea of what the student's accommodation needs may be. Only after you make the offer and the student accepts can you question the student regarding their reasonable accommodation needs for the position. If the intern requires adaptive equipment, it can be requested through VA's partnership with the Computer and Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), by visiting their Web site, at <http://www.cap.mil/>. Accommodations must be obtained by the employee's office, but the cost will be reimbursed from the **Centralized Fund** managed by ODI. For information please go to:
<http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx#WRP>.

Step Eight: IMPORTANT- For tracking purposes, it is critical that you send an e-mail message to Aurelia Waters, with the **name** of the selected student, and the **Student ID Number** found on the **Student Information Sheet**.

You will receive confirmation of funding approval/denial within five (5) business days. If the funding reimbursement request is approved, you will receive a memorandum of understanding, which outlines the terms and agreement of the expenditure transfer.

For questions regarding the WRP Centralized Fund, please contact:

Aurelia Waters, WRP Fund Coordinator
Office of Diversity and Inclusion (06)
E-mail: Aurelia.Waters@va.gov
Phone: 202-461-4124

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) Funding for Fiscal Year 2013
Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: Will VA fund WRP summer student interns?

A: Yes! As part of our continuing efforts to identify and employ qualified individuals with disabilities, VA is pleased to announce that the Office of Human Resources and Administration, as a part of the Human Capital Investment Plan, has established a centralized fund that will be used to reimburse salary costs for WRP students during fiscal year (FY) 2013. The goal of the fund is to minimize funding barriers that may prevent full utilization of the WRP.

Q: What is WRP?

A: The WRP for College Students with Disabilities is coordinated annually by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the U.S. Department of Defense, and provides job opportunities in the Federal government for college students with disabilities, some of whom are Veterans. Annually, trained recruiters from WRP's Federal agency partners conduct personal interviews with more than 2,000 students with disabilities at college and university campuses across the nation, and develop a database listing the qualifications of each student. Student applications are evaluated and those who receive a score indicating their employment readiness are referred for employment. Interns are responsible for all transportation, employment relocation, and housing expenses.

Q: Who will administer VA's WRP centralized fund for FY 2013?

A. VA Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) will administer the centralized fund and will approve reimbursement funding on a first come, first serve basis. To improve your chances of receiving centralized funds for an intern, ODI recommends that you promptly request access to the WRP Web site and identify viable candidate(s). Detailed instructions and required forms are available on VA's Disability Program Web site at: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/pwd.aspx>. Please note that organizations do not need to create a new position description or PD; they may use an existing PD.

Q: Will a WRP position count against the organizations Full-Time Equivalent Employment (FTEE)?

A: The answer varies by Administration. Please consult with your local HRO.

Q: Who should I contact if I have more questions?

A: If you have any questions, you should contact: Aurelia Waters, WRP Fund Coordinator, ODI, at (202) 461-4124 or via e-mail at: Aurelia.Waters@va.gov.