

**Competitive Grants Technical Assistance Guide
(TAG)
for 2nd & 3rd Year Optional Funding Grant Modifications**

I. Determining Eligibility for Optional Year Funding:

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), Homeless Female Veterans and Veterans with Families Program (HFVVF), Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) and Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) Solicitation for Grant Application (SGA) will indicate if optional years funding will be available.

VETS will allow for two (2) optional years of funding provided satisfactory grantee performance in the previous performance period and sufficient funding is available. Funding to support 2nd and 3rd year options is automatically set aside upon receipt of program allocations.

Grantees do not have to compete for 2nd and 3rd year optional funding as they have already successfully competed for these funds with their initial grant award. A list of HVRP, HFVVF, IVTP and VWIP grantees that are eligible to apply for 2nd or 3rd year funding is provided in (*Attachment 1*).

II. How HVRP/HFVVF/IVTP/VWIP grantees apply for 2nd or 3rd Year Optional Funding.

A. To request any type of HVRP/HFVVF/IVTP/VWIP grant modification the following forms and information must be submitted by the eligible grantee to the Director for Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DVET)/Grant Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) in their respective State (see web site address in Section VI.1below).

B. What forms and documents are required for a grant Modification request?

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE GRANT APPLICANT:

1. The Transmittal memo with an original signature requesting the 2nd or 3rd year optional funding that specifies the name of the authorized representative who is able to enter into this grant agreement with the Department of Labor. Grantees may also indicate if there are any changes to the scope of the original grant agreement.

2. **SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance** (*Attachment 2*) with original signature in blue ink reflecting the original start date of the grant, and indicating that this is a “revision” of an existing grant. The SF 424 identifies the total amount of projected funding needed to continue operations for the new 12 month performance period **not to exceed the original grant award.** The grantee can request less funding than what was originally awarded but not more.

3. **A SF 424A Budget Information** (*see Attachment 3*) showing four (4) new quarters of funding. The funding on the SF 424A must crosswalk and equal the funds requested on the SF 424, budget narrative, and Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-Applicants. **There will be no carryover funds. All funds must be obligated by June 30, of the Program Year (PY), including funds necessary to perform all participant follow-up activities.**

4. **If components remain unchanged** reference may be provided by the eligible grantee in their transmittal memo that, “**this request is a continuation of the current program as originally approved**” without an additional narrative.

If program changes are being requested, a program narrative is required. This must include a statement of need, program design, program goals, qualifications, utilization of community linkages, and budget information. The requested program changes must clearly identify program activity, program efficiency, or resolve problems which have been identified during the last PY program operations.

5. **A Budget Narrative** that crosswalks and equals the funds requested on the SF 424 and SF 424A that explains each of the SF 424A budget line items, how the funds will be used including Direct Cost Descriptions for Applicants and Sub-Applicants, and the methodologies used to determine the budget line item expenditures. For example: planned travel expenditures for privately owned vehicle reimbursement of cents per mile for approximate mileage. VETS no longer accepts cost categories of other or miscellaneous, the applicant must itemize each expenditure.

6. **Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-Applicants** (*see Attachment 4*) that crosswalks and equals the total amount requested on the SF 424, SF 424A, and Budget Narrative.

7. **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement form is to be completed by all grantees.** If a grantee is charging indirect costs they must submit a copy of the approval of their indirect cost rate for the subject performance period and include the methodologies used. **Note: The Grant Officer will not award funding without a copy of the indirect cost approval**

letter for the specific grant period or the letter requesting an indirect cost rate. (see Attachment 5)

8. A Recommended Format for Planned Common Measures

Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Chart (see Attachment 6) that is equal to or exceeds the first or second year pertinent final goals unless an explanation and justification is provided to verify that first or second year pertinent final goals were unattainable due to circumstances beyond the grantees control. **Please note that funding may be reduced if proposed second or third year pertinent final goals are reduced.**

9. All certifications and assurances remain in effect throughout the duration of the grant. The grantee continues to be bound by these when accepting the second or third optional year grant award. However, if the grantee representative authorized to engage in this type of grant activity has changed, then the grantee must submit a new original signed certification and assurances form and indicate the change in their cover letter. (see Attachment 7)

10. Actual technical and financial performance reports for the period ending December 31, 2010 are to be submitted with their grant applications (printing a Common Measures data spreadsheet is acceptable). If the technical performance and/or financial data are unavailable at the time of application, 2nd/3rd year funding availability will be impacted.

DVET/GOTR/RAVET Responsibilities:

11. Goals Comparison Spreadsheet (see Attachment 8) noting any justifications for deviations.

12. DVET recommendation memorandum and Grant Review Checklist (see Attachment 9, checklist)

13. DVET/GOTR On-Site Monitoring Report, if applicable and if not, reason(s) for not performing the on-site evaluation explained in the DVET recommendation memorandum. Refer to section (III.B.4).

14. RAVET recommendation memorandum and Grant Review Checklist (see Attachment 9 & 10).

C. Grant Application Forms and Instructions

The grant application forms and their instructions can be downloaded from below listed web site addresses:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_forms.html
www.dol.gov/vets

D. Grant Provisions in effect:

The grant award requirements, General Grant Provisions, HVRP/VWIP SGA, and their respective PY Special Grant Provisions will remain in effect for the PY period of performance unless updated and provided to the grantees by the VETS National Office and/or Grant Officer.

The VETS National Office typically reviews the Special Grant Provisions at least yearly to ensure updated programmatic and financial reporting requirements are current. If/when Special Grant Provisions are updated and/or modified, the new Special Provisions are provided by the Grant Officer with the Notice of Award document.

III. Grant Modification Review Process

A. Who Reviews and Approves 2nd & 3rd Optional Year Grant modifications?

The following U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service staff-will review the 2nd & 3rd optional year grant modification application packages from their respective State(s) and Region(s).

- Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET)/Grant Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) reviews and makes recommendations for approval/disapproval;
- Regional Administrator for Veterans' Employment and Training (RAVET) reviews and makes recommendations for approval/disapproval;
- Regional Competitive Grants Expert Team Representative(s) reviews either simultaneously in cooperation with the RAVET/Regional Office Reviews (in order to curtail travel expenditures) and/or as a part of the CGET on-site team in the National Office – reviews and makes recommendation for approval/disapproval;

- The CGET Team Lead and the Competitive Grants Lead, reviews, makes recommendation for approval/disapproval, and generates the financial documentation-
- The Director of Operations, Grants and Transition Programs-reviews, makes recommendation for approval, and authorizes the financial obligations.
- The Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training and/or the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training reviews, makes final recommendations for approval, and authorizes the financial obligations.;
- The Grant Officer reviews and approves all grant awards and modification requests, generates the grant award documents, and forwards financial obligation documents to DOL Finance. The Grant Officer maintains the "official" grant files.

B. The Grant Modification Review Process

The grant modification review process consists of analyzing the grant modification application package for completeness and accuracy, ensuring the financial data crosswalks on all forms and that it is completed as required. The review process also includes analyzing grantee actual vs. planned technical performance reports and fiscal activity through the quarter ending December 31.

1. DVETs/GOTRs must compare each grantee's original goals from the last years approved application with proposed final goals for the current year.
2. If proposed final goals are less than the previous year, then the DVET/GOTR is to notify the grantee.
3. The DVET/GOTR is authorized to negotiate with the grantee to ensure that the proposed final performance goals are at least equal to last year's approved final goals, unless there are special circumstances that prevent the grantee from performing. If so, the grantee is to provide an explanation and justification for each goal deviation.
4. DVETs/GOTRs are to conduct their annual on-site monitoring visits for each active HVRP/VWIP grant within their respective State, as travel funds permit. A courtesy copy of the on-site

monitoring report is to be sent to each appropriate grantee and a “hard copy” forwarded with each grant modification application request package.

In an effort to preserve travel funds for priority program activities:

- An on-site evaluation is required for all HVRP/VWIP grantees at “high risk” during the PY performance period.
- For all HVRP/VWIP grantees currently on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), an on-site evaluation is highly recommended.
- For all HVRP/VWIP grantees with a history of successfully achieving their programmatic and financial goals, an on-site evaluation should be performed as travel funds permit. However, it is not required

C. Recommendations;

- If the eligible grantee meets or exceeds all of their planned activities for the pertinent performance **goals the DVET/GOTR/RAVET should recommend 2nd or 3rd year funding.**
- **If the eligible grantee experiences deviations of +/-10% to +/-15% from planned technical performance and/or financial goals,** the DVET/RAVET should initiate a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), before recommending 2nd or 3rd year funding “at high risk”. A high risk designation requires grantees to report technical and financial progress on a monthly basis and DVETs/GOTRs are to provide monthly technical assistance to the high risk grantee via on-site, e-mail, or phone conversations.
- **For those eligible grantees that were on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and/or placed on “high risk”,** the DVET/GOTR and their respective RAVET must indicate in their forwarding memorandum whether or not the approved CAP had a positive effect on the grantee’s ability to perform according to the original grant agreement. Further, if recommending 2nd or 3rd year funding of a previously designated “high risk” grantee that is now performing satisfactorily, that the grantee is expected to perform satisfactorily during the 2nd or 3rd year funding period (within +/-15% of planned goals).

- **If a “high risk” grantee has failed to show improvement** and we have provided (and documented) extensive technical assistance, to include a CAP, but the grantee still fails to perform, then the DVET/GOTR and their respective RAVET may recommend that 2nd or 3rd year funding not be awarded.

D. If a Grantee Does Not Want to Apply for 2nd or 3rd Year Funding;

3rd If an eligible HVRP/VWIP grantee “voluntarily” does not apply for 2nd or year funding, then the DVET/GOTR is to secure an original signed **“withdrawal”** letter from the grantee and forward it to their respective RAVET who, will forward it to National Office to the attention of the Competitive Grants Lead.

IV. Actions Required and Due Dates

1. DVETs/GOTRs are to immediately ensure that eligible HVRP/HFVVF/IVTP/VWIP grantees within their respective States are aware of the 2nd or 3rd year funding requirements as outlined in this Technical Assistance Guide (see Attachments 1 and 2 for lists of eligible applicants). Note: DVETs/ GOTRs are not authorized to deviate from the instructions and/or due dates contained in this directive. If the grantee is unable to meet the requirements, DVETs/GOTRs are to inform their respective RAVETs, who will inform their respective CGET member and the Competitive Grants Lead.
2. Grantees must submit their 2nd or 3rd optional year grant modification requests to their respective DVET **by no later than close of business February 18,2011** (see web site address below in Section VI.1.).
3. DVETs will forward the “original” grant modification request package with his/her cover memo indicating their recommendation for approval/disapproval, completed grant review checklist (*see Attachment 9*) and completed comparison of goals spreadsheet (*see Attachment 8*) to the RAVET **by no later than February 25, 2011**. DVETs will ensure any necessary corrections are made prior to submitting grant modification packages to the RAVET.
4. RAVETs and their Regional CGET Representatives will simultaneously review the 2nd & 3rd year grant modification packages, make their recommendation for approval/disapproval in the RAVET transmittal memo addressed to Grant Officer Cassandra Mitchell through the Director of Operations, Grants and Transition Programs, Gordon J. Burke, Jr. RAVETs will complete their section of the grant review checklist and

ensure any necessary corrections are made prior to submitting grant modification package to the National Office.

5. All completed original grant modification request packages are to be **mailed via federal express** to the attention of the Competitive Grants Lead Kenneth Fenner, Room S-1312 by **no later than close of business March 4, 2011.**

Note: Please do not use regular mail to send the grant modification applications to Washington D.C. as they are still radiating the incoming mail and it is usually received several weeks later and altered by the radiating process.

6. The Competitive Grants Lead will accept 2nd and 3rd year grant modification applications and grantee actual technical performance reports received late at the DVET and RAVET levels and make a determination of acceptance or rejection on a case by case basis.

7. The Competitive Grants Lead will accept any type of grant modification request (i.e., budget line item deviations, change in scope, etc.) up to **close of business March 4, 2011.** Please note that grant modification requests received after close of business March 4, will not be accepted.

V. **Once Request is approved**

- The Grant Officer will generate a grant award document and send it directly to the grantee point of contact listed on the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance. The grant award document will indicate that the grant modification request was approved and is effective the date signed by the Grant Officer.
- The Grant Officer will send the Competitive Grants Lead a copy of all grant award documents, scan the documents and send them electronically to their respective RAVETs and DVETs.
- Grantees recommended and approved for continued funding “at high risk”, will receive a letter from the VETS, Director of Operations, Grants and Transition Programs shortly after the grant awards are finalized by the Grant Officer. Copies will be sent to their respective DVETs/GOTRs and RAVETs). The high risk letter will indicate that grantee technical, programmatic and financial reporting will be required on a monthly basis. The DVET/GOTR will provide each grantee awarded “at high risk” technical assistance on a monthly basis in order to ensure performance increases to the expected levels.

VI. Technical Assistance

1. Grantees are to contact their DVETs/GOTRs for technical assistance.
A list of DVETs is located at website address:

**U.S. Department of Labor --Veterans' Employment and Training Service
(VETS) -- Staff Directory**

2. DVETs/GOTRs are to contact their respective RAVET and/or their Regional CGET Representatives.
3. Regional CGET Representatives are to contact the CGET Lead.
4. RAVETs and CGET Lead are to contact the Competitive Grants Lead.

Attachments:

- (1) HVRP/VWIP Eligible Applicants for 2nd and 3rd Year Funding
- (2) SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance
- (3) SF 424A Budget Information
- (4) Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-Applicants
- (5) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement Form
- (6) Recommended Format for Planned Common Measures
Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Chart
- (7) Certifications and Assurances
- (8) Goals Comparison Spreadsheet
- (9) DVET/RAVET Grant Review Checklist