

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SUMMARY:

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY NAME: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

FEDERAL OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Adaptive Sports Programs for Disabled Veterans and Disabled Members of the Armed Forces

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs 38 CFR Part 77

Funding Availability under the Grants for Adaptive Sports Programs for Disabled Veterans and Disabled Members of the Armed Forces

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Initial

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: VA-ASG-2019-01

CFDA NUMBER: 64.034

KEY DATES: Applications for adaptive sports program grants under the Adaptive Sports Grant (ASG) Program must be submitted in Grants.Gov to be transmitted to the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 2, 2018. Awards made for adaptive sports activities will fund operations for a 13-month period beginning September 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2019.

VA is announcing the availability of funds for adaptive sports grants under the ASG Program. This notice of funding availability (NOFA) contains information concerning the ASG Program, grant application processes, and the amount of funding available.

ADDRESSES:

*Submission of Application Package:* The ASG application for funding opportunity VA-ASG-2019-01 is available through Grants.Gov (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>) and listed as VA-Adaptive Sports Programs. Three additional mandatory forms to be included with the application are located at the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program website at [https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va\\_grant\\_program.asp](https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp). All application documents are to be submitted through Grants.Gov to VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (10P4RN), Suite 673C, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420. Applications may not be sent by mail, email or facsimile (FAX). Applications must be received in Grants.Gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the application deadline date. All application materials must be in a format compatible with the Grants.Gov application submission tool. Applications must arrive as a complete package. Materials arriving separately will not be included in the application package for consideration and may result in the application being rejected. Applicants may submit an amendment to a grant application as described under 38 CFR 77.6. For procedures to submit an amendment to an existing grant application, contact VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events, Suite 673C, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420; (202) 632-7136 (this is NOT a toll-free number); [Michael.Welch5@va.gov](mailto:Michael.Welch5@va.gov) or [vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov](mailto:vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov).

To submit an application in Grants.Gov, the applicant must have current registration in Duns & Bradstreet for a D-U-N-S Number

(<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/>), the System for Award Management (SAM) for a Commercial and Government Entity Code (CAGE)

(<https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1#1>), and Grants.Gov with a current E-Business Point of Contact that will be submitting the application.

*Technical Assistance:* Information on how to obtain technical assistance with the preparation of an initial ASG application is available on the NVSP&SE website at:

[https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va\\_grant\\_program.asp](https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael F. Welch, VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (10P4RN), Suite 673C, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420; (202) 632-7136 (this is NOT a toll-free number);

[Michael.Welch5@va.gov](mailto:Michael.Welch5@va.gov) or [vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov](mailto:vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

## **I. Program Description**

A. *Purpose:* The ASG Program's purpose is to provide grants to eligible adaptive sports entities to plan, develop, manage, and implement programs to provide adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Adaptive sports activities means:

- (1) instruction, participation, and competition in adaptive sports;
- (2) training and technical assistance to program administrators, coaches, recreation therapists, instructors, VA employees, and other appropriate individuals; and

(3) coordination, Paralympic classification of athletes, athlete assessment, sport-specific training techniques, program development (including programs at the local level), sports equipment, supplies, program evaluation, and other activities related to the implementation and operation of the program.

*B. Funding Priorities:* The overriding goal for this NOFA is to ensure that appropriate levels of resources are provided to eligible adaptive sports entities with the greatest capabilities to meet the needs and priorities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities as described in the ASG Program goals and objectives. Additionally, this NOFA aims to provide adaptive sports activities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited sports opportunities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities as further described in V.A.2.(g) below.

*C. Definitions:* Section 77.2 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, contains definitions of terms used in the ASG Program.

*D. Approach:* Grantees will be expected to leverage adaptive sports grant funds to provide adaptive sports activities for Veterans, and members of the Armed Forces, with disabilities. In doing so, grantees are required to establish outreach programs including active liaison with VA, Department of Defense, State, local and tribal governments; and Veterans Services Organizations (VSOs), private agencies, and organizations as detailed under 77.11. Grantees may work through coordinated partnerships built through formal agreements or the informal working relationships commonly found amongst adaptive sports entities, VSOs and other entities providing adaptive sport activities and/or services. As part of the application, under 77.5(a)(5), all applicants will provide letters of support from any partners delivering services that

reflect the applicant's engagement in providing adaptive sports activities. Letters of partnership should include details of the scope of activities and if applicable, scope of funding involved in the partnership. Letters of recommendation from individuals and entities that are not involved in delivery of adaptive sports services do not qualify as partnership letters. Assistance in developing ongoing rehabilitative, therapeutic, and whole-life health adaptive sports opportunities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities is a fundamental goal of the ASG Program. For planning purposes, the ASG Program is not intended to provide long-term support. The program is administered annually and does not guarantee subsequent awards.

E. *Authority:* Funding applied for under this NOFA is authorized by 38 U.S.C. 521A, as amended by Public Law 114-228. VA implements the ASG Program by regulation in 38 CFR Part 77. Funds made available under this NOFA are subject to the requirements of the aforementioned regulations and other applicable laws and regulations.

F. *Requirements for the Use of Adaptive Sports Programs Grant Funds:* The grantee's request for funding must be consistent with the limitations and uses of grant funds set forth in 38 CFR Part 77 and this NOFA. In accordance with the regulations and this NOFA, the following requirements apply to grants awarded under this NOFA:

(1) Grantees may use up to a **maximum of five percent of grant funds for administrative costs** identified in § 77.14(c)(ii). The five percent rate is mandated by Public Law 113-59, Sec. 5(a) and applies unique definitions of administrative costs that supersede other federal non-legislative guidance.

(2) Grantees may support or provide services (including adaptive sports activities) to individuals with disabilities who are not Veterans or members of the Armed Forces, or both, but grantees will not use grant funds to support or provide services (including adaptive sports activities) to those individuals, as identified in § 77.14(d).

(3) Grantees may not use grant funds to support or provide services from individuals barred from receiving VA benefits, as identified in § 77.14(e).

## **II. Federal Award Information**

A. *Overview:* This NOFA announces the availability of funds for initial grants to provide adaptive sports activities under the Adaptive Sports Program. Up to nine million dollars (\$9,000,000) may be available through this NOFA.

B. *Funding:* The funding priorities for this NOFA are as follows.

VA will provide up to \$9,000,000 over a 13-month period for initial grants to eligible entities proposing adaptive sports activities listed under I.A. above. Of the funding available, up to \$1,000,000 has been designated for equine therapy for mental health issues, as established in Public Law 115-141. **VA will not consider the renewable grant application format under this NOFA.**

C. *Allocation of Funds:* Funding will be awarded under this NOFA to grantees for a 13-month period. The following requirements apply to adaptive sports grants awarded under this NOFA:

(1) The maximum award amount for an ASG grant under this NOFA is \$500,000.

(2) There is not an established maximum number of ASG grant applications per eligible adaptive sports entity per year.

D. *Adaptive Sports Activities Grant Award Period:* All ASG grants will be for a 13-month period.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

A. *Eligible Applicants:* To be eligible, an applicant must qualify as a Non-Federal Government entity with significant experience in managing a large-scale adaptive sports program for persons with disabilities if those disabilities are the same as those of disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. To demonstrate significant experience, all key personnel identified in the grant application must have experience implementing the adaptive sports activities provided under the grant. Grantees must have experience working with persons with disabilities and those disabilities must be applicable to Veterans with disabilities. The experience must be for a minimum of two continuous years immediately prior to the date of submission to VA of the grant application. When more than one entity would be engaged in the provision of the adaptive sports activities, the entity applying for the adaptive sports grant must provide signed documentation that verifies, through the partnership, that it has the experience necessary to implement all of the adaptive sports activities proposed in the adaptive sports grant application.

B. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This section is not applicable to the ASG Program.

C. *Equine Therapy:* To be eligible for consideration for funding specifically designated for equine therapy for mental health issues as authorized by Public Law 115-141, the applicant must clearly document objectives and strategies to address mental health issues through equine therapy in the grant proposal. Applications with equine therapy that do not provide justification of mental health aspects will be

considered as an adaptive sport program. For Sections IV, V, and VI under this NOFA, the instructions for equine therapy for mental health issues and all other grant applications are the same.

D. *Other*. To be eligible, an entity must comply with 2 CFR 200 criteria for a Non-Federal entity eligible for federal grant programs. For example, if an entity has been found to be in violation of a particular Federal statute and as a result is precluded from receipt of federal grant funds, that entity is ineligible and will not be considered for a grant. Because the ASG Program provides adaptive sports activities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities, applicants that do not provide adaptive sports activities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities will not be considered for funding.

#### **IV. Application and Submission Information**

A. *Obtaining an Application Package*: Download directly from the Grants.Gov Web site at <http://www.grants.gov/>. Any questions regarding this process should be referred to the NVSP&SE Program Office via phone at (202) 632-7136 (not a toll-free number) or via e-mail at [Michael.Welch5@va.gov](mailto:Michael.Welch5@va.gov) or [vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov](mailto:vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov). For detailed ASG Program information and requirements, see 38 CFR Part 77 and the NVSP&SE Program website at:

[https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va\\_grant\\_program.asp](https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp)

B. *Content and Form of Application*: The VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program application package provided under Grants.Gov Opportunity Number VA-ASG-2019-01 contains electronic versions of required application forms, including SF-424, SF-424A

and SF-424B. In addition, applicants must submit VA Form 10096 Adaptive Sport Grant Application, VA Form 10091 and the VA Administrative and Financial Review Questionnaire for Grantees. These forms can be downloaded at the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program website at [https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va\\_grant\\_program.asp](https://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp); these forms are not available on Grants.Gov. If the adaptive sports activities will be implemented through partnerships as described in 77.5(a)(5) and 77.8(b), signed documentation of the partners confirming a partnership must be submitted in Grants.Gov. If not, the proposal will be evaluated as if the partnership has not been officially established. Additional supporting attachments may be provided at the applicant's discretion.

*C. Submission Dates and Times:* Applications must be submitted through Grants.Gov to be provided to VA Office of NVSP&SE by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 2, 2018. Grants will fund operations for the 13-month period beginning September 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2019. Applications must be submitted as a complete package. Materials arriving separately will not be included in the application package for consideration and may result in the application being rejected. Additionally, in the interest of fairness to all competing applicants, this deadline is firm as to date and hour, and VA will treat as ineligible for consideration any application that is received after the deadline. Applicants should consider this practice and make early submission of their materials to avoid risk of loss of eligibility brought about by unanticipated delays, computer service outages, or other delivery-related problems. If an application package has been submitted, applicants may submit an amendment to the grant application package as described under 38 CFR 77.6.

D. *Intergovernmental Review*: This section is not applicable to the ASG Program.

E. *Funding Restrictions*: Up to \$9,000,000 will be awarded for adaptive sports grants to be funded under this NOFA, including up to \$8,000,000 for adaptive sports grants, and up to an additional \$1,000,000 for equine therapy for mental health issues. Eligible entities are not restricted to the number of grants they may receive. The following requirements apply to adaptive sports activities grants awarded under this NOFA:

(1) A grant may not exceed annual appropriated funding for the ASG Program.

(2) There is not an established maximum number of ASG Program grants per eligible adaptive sports entity per year.

(3) An eligible entity that receives a grant may use a portion of the grant for administration and personnel expenses of the eligible entity within the authorized levels as described in I.F.

(4) A grant may not be awarded for provision of adaptive sports that are otherwise provided on an ongoing, National basis by partner organizations through signed a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement between VA and such partners.

F. *Other Submission Requirements*:

(1) Applicants may apply for an initial grant at this time, but not a renewal grant.

(a) *Initial Grant*. An eligible entity may apply for funding as an initial grant if they have or have not received prior funding from the VA ASG Program.

(b) *Renewal Grant*. In subsequent years after receiving an initial grant, 38 CFR 77.4(a) provided the option for grantees to apply for a renewal grant if the

grantee's program remained substantially the same. However, VA NVSP&SE will not accept renewal applications for the ASG Program during this application cycle, and current grantees must submit initial applications if seeking a grant.

(2) Submission of *an incorrect or incomplete application package will result in the application being rejected* during threshold review. The application packages must contain all required forms and certifications. Selections will be made based on criteria described in 38 CFR Part 77 and this NOFA. Applicants and grantees will be notified of any additional information needed to confirm or clarify information provided in the application and the deadline by which to submit such information. The application package must be submitted through Grants.Gov to be transmitted to the following: VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (10P4RN), Suite 673C, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420. Applications may not be sent by mail, email or facsimile (FAX).

## **V. Application Review Information**

### *A. Criteria:*

1. VA will only score applicants that meet the following threshold requirements:
  - (a) The application is filed within the time period established in the NOFA;
  - (b) The application is completed in all parts;
  - (c) The applicant is an eligible entity;
  - (d) The activities for which the adaptive sports program grant is requested are eligible for funding under 38 CFR 77 and this NOFA;
  - (e) The applicant's proposed participants are eligible to receive adaptive sports activities under 38 CFR 77;

(f) The applicant agrees to comply with the requirements under 38 CFR 77;

(g) The applicant does not have an outstanding obligation to the Federal Government that is in arrears, and does not have an overdue or unsatisfactory response to an audit; and

(h) The applicant is not in default by failing to meet the requirements for any previous Federal assistance.

2. VA will use the following criteria to score applicants who are applying for ASG Program grants:

(a) VA will award up to 10 points based on the clarity of the applicant's adaptive sports activities plan;

(b) VA will award up to 10 points based on the applicant's program concept and objectives;

(c) VA will award up to 15 points based on the program design based on facts, good reasoning, sound judgment, and logic, and program elements directly linked to the achievement of program objectives;

(d) VA will award up to 10 points based on adequacy of program management structure to include background, qualifications, experience, and past performance (with particular focus on adaptive sports activities) of the applicant, and any partner or partners identified by the applicant in the adaptive sports grant application;

(e) VA will award up to 20 points based on the applicant's capability (including support provided by any partnership or partnerships) to successfully support the program;

(f) VA will award up to 10 points based on the applicant's financial capability and plan and based on whether budgeted costs are reasonable, allowable and produce good value for the amount of funds paid for the activities proposed to be undertaken;

(g) VA will award up to 15 points based on the applicant's proposal to provide adaptive sports opportunities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Geographical regions having limited sports opportunities and areas low on adaptive sports opportunities will be positively weighted. This weighting also will include demographic distribution of population in determining geographic need;

(h) VA will award up to 10 points based on the applicant's proposal to provide an adaptive sports activity or adaptive sports activities that meet VA's current needs and priorities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities. Grant applications will be evaluated on how well they explain how the proposed adaptive sports activities meet VA's policy described in VI.B., and VA's goals and objectives as described in VIII.A., and

(i) VA will award up to 1 point for inclusion of all required information in the grant application as specified by 38 U.S.C. 521A(c).

Detailed information regarding applications is located in 38 CFR 77.4-77.13.

B. *Review and Selection Process:* VA will review all initial adaptive sports program grant applications in response to this NOFA according to the following steps.

VA will:

1. Score all applicants that submit all components necessary to have a complete ASG Program grant application as described in 38 CFR 77.

2. Rank those applications who score at least 60 cumulative points and receive at least one point under each of the categories identified for applicants in § 77.5(a). The applications will be ranked in order from highest to lowest scores.

3. Utilize the ranked scores of applications as the primary basis for selection while also considering the total amount of grant funds allocated for a specific sport, region, or type of activity.

## **VI. Federal Award Administration Information**

A. *Award Notices:* Although subject to change, the Office of NVSP&SE expects to announce grant recipients on or about August 31, 2018. Prior to executing a funding agreement, VA will contact the applicants, make known the amount of proposed funding, and verify the applicant still is seeking the funding. Once VA verifies that the applicant is still seeking funding, VA will enter into an agreement with the grantee and make payments to the grant recipient in accordance with 38 CFR 77, VA Office of Finance policy (<http://www.va.gov/finance/policy/pubs/volumeX.asp>), and other applicable provisions of this NOFA.

B. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* In order to qualify for an adaptive sports grant, grantees are required to offer outreach programs as described in 38 CFR 77.11. In addition, consistent with the VA's adaptive sports outreach programs' goals, grantees will interact with the VA's outreach programs to facilitate effectiveness and efficiency of the adaptive sports grant and the comprehensive approach of providing adaptive sports opportunities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities at the national, regional and community-based levels.

C. *Reporting:* VA places great emphasis on the responsibility and accountability of grantees. As described in 38 CFR 77.16 and 77.18, VA has procedures in place to monitor adaptive sports activities provided to participants and outcomes associated with the adaptive sports activities provided. Applicants should be aware of the following:

1. Upon execution of a grant agreement with VA, grantees will comply with requests from the Office of NVSP&SE for provision of oversight and monitoring of adaptive sports activities subject to 38 CFR 77.18.

2. Grantees will be required to report data such as information on participants served, financial and acquisition data related to the grant, and types of supportive services provided. Grantees must treat the data for activities funded by the ASG Program separate from that of activities funded by other programs. Grantees will be required to work with NVSP&SE to report grantee-level data for activities funded by the ASG Program to VA on at least a quarterly basis.

3. VA shall complete annual monitoring evaluations of each grantee. Monitoring will also include the submission of quarterly and annual financial and performance reports by the grantee. The grantee will be expected to demonstrate adherence to the grantee's proposed program concept, as described in the grantee's application.

4. Grantees will be assessed based on their ability to provide the deliverables outlined in their grant application. In addition to meeting program requirements defined by the regulations and NOFA, grantees will be assessed on their ability to facilitate participants' opportunities for ongoing participation in adaptive sports activities to enhance therapeutic effects and whole-life health.

## **VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact**

A. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael F. Welch, VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (10P4RN), Suite 673C, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420; (202) 632-7136 (this is NOT a toll-free number); [Michael.Welch5@va.gov](mailto:Michael.Welch5@va.gov) or [vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov](mailto:vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov).

All correspondence with VA concerning this NOFA should reference the above title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation. Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFA deadline has passed, VA staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

#### **VIII. Other Information**

A. *VA's Goals and Objectives for Funds Awarded Under this NOFA:* In accordance with 38 CFR 77.5(a)(7) and (8), VA will evaluate an applicant's ability to meet VA's goals and objectives for the ASG Program. VA's goals and objectives include the provision of adaptive sports activities designed to enhance the rehabilitative, therapeutic, and whole-life health of Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities across geographic regions. For purposes of this NOFA, VA's goals and objectives also include the provision of adaptive sports activities across the spectrum of adaptive sports from recreational through elite levels of participation.

B. *Payments of Adaptive Sports Program Grant Funds:* Grantees will receive payments electronically through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System. All payments will be made on either a just-in-time or reimbursement basis as per guidance from the Office of Management and Budget. This

process minimizes the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the United States Treasury and the disbursement by the ASG Program grant recipient.