

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veteran Health Administration

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY: Grants for Adaptive Sports Programs for Disabled Veterans and Disabled Members of the Armed Forces (Equine Therapy Grant)

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY NAME: National Veteran Sports Program and Special Events

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Initial

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: VA-EQUINE-22

ASSISTANCE LISTING: 64.034

KEY DATES: Submission deadline 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 1, 2022

All technical questions related to the content of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) must be submitted no later than 10 business days prior to the submission deadline.

Award decisions are expected to be made on or before September 30; however, please be aware that there are a variety of circumstances that may occur that could result in a later or earlier than expected award decision.

TO APPLY: Applications must be submitted via www.grants.gov. Applications may not be sent by mail, email or facsimile (FAX).

SUMMARY: The Department of Veteran Affairs' National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events (NVSPSE) announces the availability of \$1,500,000 (subject to the availability of federal funds) for the VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program's Equine Therapy Grants. VA awards grants to qualifying organizations to plan, develop, manage and implement programs to provide adaptive sports, provider training, and other opportunities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities.

Applications for general adaptive sports proposals, not focused on addressing mental health issues through equine therapy¹, will not be considered under this NOFA and must be submitted to Funding Opportunity Number VA-SPORTS-22.

¹ Definition of Equine Therapy can be found in the section [VIII. Appendix – Definitions](#).

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I. Program Description

A. Purpose:

The Adaptive Sports Grant Program, as identified under assistance listing 64.034 provides grants to eligible entities to plan, develop, manage, and implement programs to provide adaptive sports activities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities. For the purpose of the Equine Therapy Grant, VA will be utilizing the definition found in 38 CFR 77.2 “adaptive sports activities,” to apply to “equine therapy” NOFA:

(1) instruction, participation, and competition in adaptive sports

For example: introductory equine therapy clinics, equine therapy camps, therapeutic riding, regularly scheduled equine therapy sessions, lessons and tournaments; which address mental health for veterans with disabilities and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities

(2) training and technical assistance to program administrators, coaches, recreation therapists, instructors, VA employees, and other appropriate individuals

For example: equine therapy-specific certification courses, instructor trainings, continuing education courses geared towards equine therapy.

(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.

For example: equipment distribution programs, instructional media (including handbooks, virtual program development).

B. Priorities and Goals:

The primary goal for this NOFA is to ensure that appropriate levels of resources are provided to eligible adaptive sports entities with capabilities that are well-suited to meet the needs and priorities for Veterans with disabilities and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities. Priorities to be supported by this NOFA are:

- providing adaptive sports for Veterans, and members of the Armed Forces, with disabilities in underserved activities that are of increased interest.
- providing adaptive sports for Veterans, and members of the Armed Forces, with disabilities in geographic regions where limited adaptive sports opportunities are available for this population.

- in-person or web-based training for adaptive sports providers that minimizes required travel and maximizes effectiveness.
- including VA subject matter experts in the development of the curriculum for in-person or web-based training for adaptive sports providers.
- provide classifier certification opportunities to increase qualified personnel across the country.
- provide athlete classification opportunities for Veterans, and members of the Armed Forces, with disabilities.

C. Definitions:

38 CFR 77.2 and VIII. Appendix of this NOFA contain definitions of terms used in the Equine Therapy Grant and this NOFA.

D. Authority:

This grant program is authorized by 38 U.S.C. 521A. VA implements the Equine Therapy Grant by regulation in 38 CFR Part 77. Funds made available under this NOFA are subject to the requirements of the aforementioned regulation and other applicable laws and regulations.

E. Requirements for the Use of Grant Funds:

The grantee's request for funding must be consistent with the limitations on 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 all administrative expenses**, which includes administrative expenses and any costs associated with an employee of the eligible entity other than reimbursement for time spent by such an employee directly providing coaching, training, or direct services for participants, as identified in 38 CFR 77.14(c). Funding associated with proposed activities that are administrative in nature (e.g., recruitment activities, planning and grant management) will be considered as administrative costs, even if listed as otherwise in the proposal. The five percent rate is mandated by 38 USC 521A and applies unique definitions of administrative costs that supersede other federal non-legislative guidance.
- (2) Grant funds are solely to be used to support or provide services to Veterans or members of the Armed Forces with disabilities, as required in 38 CFR 77.14(d).
- (3) Grantees may not use grant funds to support or provide services to individuals barred from receiving VA benefits, as identified in 38 CFR 77.14(e).

F. Evaluation and Performance:

Grantees will be evaluated on the quality and timeliness of programmatic and financial reporting. NVSPSE will evaluate performance according to the grantee's originally approved proposal; including the percentage of participant numbers served, percentage of executed deliverables, adherence to the approved budget and estimated cost per veteran, and proper submission of modification requests as needed.

Evaluation and Performance metrics may be used by NVSPSE as Prior Performance information for review of future applications.

II. Federal Award Information

A. Funding:

This NOFA announces the availability of approximately \$1,500,000 to be awarded by VA for proposals to plan, develop, manage, and implement programs that provide equine therapy activities for Veterans, and members of the Armed Forces, with disabilities.

VA will not consider a renewal grant application under this NOFA. Current grantees must submit an initial application if seeking grant funding.

All awards funded under this announcement will be grants.

B. Allocation of Funds:

Funding will be awarded under this NOFA to grantees for a 12-month period. The following requirements apply to Equine Therapy Grants awarded under this NOFA:

The maximum award amount for an application under this NOFA is \$750,000.00.

Applicants should submit applications for programming related to provision of equine therapy or related services to Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities; and training for equine therapy providers to provide these services to Veterans or members of the Armed Forces with disabilities. All activities that fall under an individual category (Programming for Veterans, Training of Providers, or Other) can be included in a single application award up to a maximum of \$750,000.

The application title, as displayed on VA Form 10096 Section A. 2. and the Narrative, must include in parenthesis the primary program category being addressed in the proposal. The primary program category can be judged by the preponderance of funds spent on a particular category.

C. Equine Therapy Grant Award Period:

All Equine Therapy Grant awards will be for a 12-month period, September 30, 2022 – September 30, 2023.

III. Eligibility Information

To be eligible, an applicant must qualify as a Non-Federal Government entity with significant experience in managing a large-scale adaptive sports program, as defined in 38 CFR 77.2, for persons with disabilities if those disabilities are the same as those of Veterans with disabilities, and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities. “Significant experience” and “large-scale” are addressed in 38 CFR 77.2 as:

A. To demonstrate Significant Experience:

All the key personnel identified in the Equine Therapy Grant application must have experience implementing the adaptive sports activities to be provided, and have experience working with persons with disabilities similar to those that Veterans and members of the Armed Forces may experience, including mental health diagnoses.

The experience must be for a minimum of two continuous years immediately prior to the date of the Equine Therapy Grant application submission to VA.

When more than one entity will be engaged in the provision of the adaptive sport activities, the entity applying for the adaptive sports grant must provide documentation that verifies that through the partnership, it has the experience necessary to implement all the adaptive sports activities proposed in the adaptive sports grant application.

B. To qualify as a Large-Scale adaptive sports program an organization must be one or more of the following:

(1) An adaptive sports program of a National Paralympic Committee (NPC) or of a National Governing Body (NGB) that is authorized to provide Paralympic sports programs in one or more States.

(2) An adaptive sports program of a NGB that has been recognized by an external validating authority if the programs validated by that authority would meet the requirements of paragraph (3) of this definition if considered one program; and

(3) An adaptive sports program in which at least 50 persons with disabilities participate or in which the persons with disabilities who participate reside in at least five different congressional districts.

C. Entity Eligibility:

To be eligible, an entity must comply with 2 CFR Parts 25, and 200, criteria for a Non-Federal entity eligible for federal grant programs; including but not limited to: being registered in SAM.gov, no active exclusions or delinquent federal debt, and not being debarred or suspended.

The Equine Therapy Grant provides adaptive sports activities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities; therefore, applicants that do not provide adaptive sports activities including equine therapy for persons with disabilities that are the same as those that may be experienced by Veterans or members of the Armed Forces; or Veterans or members of the Armed Forces with disabilities will not be considered for funding.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching:

This program does not require cost sharing or matching funds. Including such funds will not receive additional consideration during the review process and is not a screening/scoring criteria.

E. Adaptive Sports Grant Program:

Applicants interested in submitting a proposal for adaptive sports other than equine therapy, including equine activities that do not address mental health must submit to Funding Opportunity Number VA-SPORTS-22, as these proposals will not be considered under this NOFA.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Submission

Upload all documents for the Equine Therapy Grant to Funding Opportunity Number VA-EQUINE-22 application via the www.grants.gov/ portal. Files should use naming convention listed below. Applications that are incomplete or incorrect may result in the application not being considered for funding.

B. Application

There are 6 elements that are required to make a complete grant application, and 3 additional optional elements. Documents for elements requiring specific forms can be found on www.grants.gov/ and the NVSPSE webpage, www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/grant-program/.

REQUIRED: Adaptive Sport Grant Application (VA Form 10096) – Required file name: “VA-10096”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

VA Form 10096 can be found on the NVSPSE Program website. All fields in the form must be completed for the form to be considered complete.

Applications including an incomplete VA Form 10096 may be screened out during the administrative review.

For the deliverables section (Exhibit A) all applicants should clearly indicate the:

- sport offered/training provided,
- city and state where the programming will be conducted,
- frequency of the programming,
- the estimated number of Veterans served/ providers trained, and
- budget estimate for each deliverable.

Additional guidance/suggestions related to completion of this form can be found on the NVSPSE website. It is a requirement that all grant recipients participate in a joint outreach campaign with VA, consistent with 38 CFR Part 77.11, to inform all eligible Veterans and separating members of the Armed Forces with disabilities about the existence of the adaptive sports activities funded by the grant. This plan can be detailed in the outreach section of VA Form 10096.

Within the Program Budget (Exhibit B), personnel expenses should be delineated between Personal (Operational) and Personal (Administrative) expenses. Personal (Operational) are any reimbursement cost associated with time spent by such an employee directly providing coaching or training for participants, and Personnel (Administrative) are any cost associated with an employee of the eligible entity other than reimbursement for time spent by such an employee directly providing coaching or training for participants.

Any additional information related to the VA Form 10096 can be included in the required Narrative document in the same format as the VA Form 10096.

REQUIRED: Program Past Performance (1-page maximum) – Required title “Past Performance”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

This document must be formatted in 12-point font, only 1 page will be provided to the review team for consideration.

Applicant must clearly demonstrate eligibility to receive a grant award in accordance with 38 CFR 77.2; including at least 2 continuous years of experience managing a large-scale adaptive sports program. Large-scale adaptive sports program includes either servicing at least 50 individuals with disabilities, or participants with disabilities who reside in at least 5

different congressional districts, or status as a National Governing Body,. Eligibility criteria are stated in Section III. A. of this NOFA.

REQUIRED: Narrative (10-page maximum) – Required title “Narrative”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

Narrative must be formatted in 12-point font, and if more than 10 pages are submitted, only 10-pages for the Narrative will be provided to the review team for consideration. This document provides an opportunity to expand upon the information in the exhibits of VA Form 10096.

Clearly state in parentheses at the top of the Narrative which category the preponderance of funding the proposal is seeking:

- Indicate “(Programming for Veterans)”
- Indicate “(Training of Providers)”
- Indicate “(Other)”

The Narrative should include detailed information regarding the proposed program that allows the Equine Therapy Grant review team to fully understand the applicant’s plan and ability to execute this plan. This includes clearly describing the plan for the proposed program; clearly stating the program concept and objectives; ensuring the plan is based on evidence and experience that will lead to attaining the objectives; clearly describing the program management structure; linking all of these aspects to support how the application will be able to successfully execute the proposed program; clearly describing and justifying the applicant’s financial capability and plan and proposed budgeted costs; describing how the proposed activities will provide opportunities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited equine therapy opportunities for Veterans and members of the Armed Forces with disabilities; and how the application meets the priorities of the Equine Therapy Grant , and specifically the priorities of this NOFA. It is recommended that attention and consideration be paid to the Merit Review criteria listed in Section V. A (2) when drafting the Narrative.

REQUIRED: Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) – Complete through www.grants.gov.

This form is completed through www.grants.gov and will be included as part of the application.

REQUIRED: Budget Information (SF-424A) – Complete through www.grants.gov.

This form is completed through www.grants.gov and will be included as part of the application.

REQUIRED: VA-FSC Vendor File Request Form (VA Form 10091) – Required title “VA-10091”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

VA Form 10091 can be found on the NVSPSE Program website. All applicable fields on the right-hand side of the form must be completed for the form to be considered complete. VA Financial Management System is unable to process VA-FSC Vendor File Request Forms that have an electronic signature; therefore, **a wet (pen and ink) signature is required**. This form is required for all applicants.

OPTIONAL: Program Specifics (2-pages maximum) – Required title “Program Specifics”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

This document must be formatted in 12-point font, and if more than 2 pages are submitted, only the first 2 pages will be considered in the review process.

This document can be utilized to expand on sections of the VA Form 10096 if they require additional space for details beyond the space allotted on VA Form 10096, e.g., Exhibits A-D.

OPTIONAL: Letters – (Combine all letters into a single document) – Required title “Support”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

- Letters of Support for recruiting target population: Letters of support may be provided to demonstrate the applicant has relationships that will allow them to successfully recruit the population targeted in the proposal. These letters may come from, but are not limited to, VA medical centers, DoD medical treatment facilities, and Veteran Service Organizations. It is recommended these letters highlight the willingness of correspondent to collaborate and assist the applicant in identifying eligible participants for the proposed activities.
- Letters of Partnerships: If the equine therapy activities will be implemented through partnerships as described in 38 CFR 77.5(a)(5) and 77.8(b), signed documentation of the partners confirming a partnership must be submitted. Letters of partnership should include details of the scope of activities and if applicable, scope of funding involved in the partnership. If these letters are not provided as directed, 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. Letters of recommendation from individuals and entities that are not involved in delivery of equine therapy services do not qualify as partnership letters.

- Letters of Congressional or Community Support: Letters of support may also be provided from members of Congress and organizations throughout the community to demonstrate broad support for the proposed efforts.

OPTIONAL: Budget Justification (2- page maximum) – Required title “Budget Justification.pdf”. This document should be saved and uploaded as a PDF.

- This document must be formatted in 12-point font, and if more than 2 pages are submitted, only the first 2 pages will be considered in the review process.
- This document can be utilized to expand on the Exhibit B and Exhibit C of the VA Form 10096. Budget Justification should include an explanation of the budget and a categorical description of proposed costs.

C. Submission Requirements:

As per 2 CFR 200, each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual, or meets the conditions under which a Federal awarding agency may exempt the applicant under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or is exempt by OMB under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) for a Commercial and Government Entity Code (CAGE) before submitting its application (www.sam.gov/SAM/). Please note, there is no cost to register, update, or renew an entity registration in SAM.
- Maintain an active SAM registration for the duration of the application period. Be currently registered and provide a valid Duns & Bradstreet number (D-U-N-S) or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in its application (<https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/>).
- Register in www.grants.gov. Authorization of roles, including the ability to submit an application on behalf of an organization, is managed by the E-Business Point of Contact for that organization. If you do not know the E-Business Point of Contact for your organization, please reach out to Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.
- Submit by required date: Once all submission requirements are completed [Section IV. B.], applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov by 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 1, 2022. In the interest of fairness to all competing applicants, the deadline is firm as to date, hour and minute. Applicants should consider this stipulation and submit materials early to avoid risk of loss of eligibility brought about by unanticipated delays. Confirmation of an application submission will be auto-generated and sent by www.grants.gov.
- 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. Applications not meeting the

above criteria will be ineligible for further review and cannot be considered for funding.

- **Amendment Submissions:** After an applicant has submitted a complete application, an applicant may submit an amendment to the grant application package, as described under 38 CFR 77.6. An amendment submitted after the deadline and prior to the grant award cannot change the scope of the original application or increase the amount of the grant requested by more than a total of 10-percent. An applicant seeking to amend its grant application must submit a narrative description of, and clear justification for, the requested changes, a revised Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance), and a revised Standard Form 424A (Budget Information). These revised documents must also be submitted through www.grants.gov.
- **Intergovernmental Review:** This section is not applicable to the Adaptive Sports Grant.

D. Funding Restrictions:

- A grant may not exceed \$750,000; A maximum of five percent of grant funds may be allocated for all administrative expenses, which includes any costs associated with an employee when not directly providing coaching or training for participants. Funding cannot be utilized to support research activities. Funding cannot be utilized to reimburse for medical services (those traditionally funded by insurance).
- Funding cannot be utilized to reimburse expenses incurred prior to the period of performance.
- Construction is not authorized through this grant mechanism; however, funding may be used to purchase equipment that would allow for safe transfers in and out of sports equipment/sports environments and improve accessibility to disabled Veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

E. Additional Submission Requirements:

Submission of an incorrect or incomplete application package will result in the application being rejected during an initial administrative review [Section V. A]. The application packages must contain all required elements listed in Section IV. B. Selections will be made based on criteria described in 38 CFR 77.5 and this NOFA. The application package must be submitted through www.grants.gov/. Applications may not be sent by mail, email or facsimile (FAX).

V. Application Review Information

Submitted applications will undergo a three-phase review process: administrative, merit, and programmatic. The administrative review criteria is indicated in Section V. A. Those determined to be ineligible based on these

stated criteria will not be scored for funding consideration. Those applications determined to be eligible for funding consideration after the administrative review will undergo a merit review, and scoring will be based on criteria indicated in Section V. B. Those applications receiving a total merit score of less than 65 will be determined to be ineligible for funding consideration. Remaining applications will be considered for funding recommendation based on the programmatic review process

A. Administrative Review:

VA will only score applications that meet the following minimum requirements:

- The application is filed within the time period and submission process established in the NOFA.
- The application includes all required elements listed in Section IV B.
- The Program (Programming for Veterans, Training of Providers or Other) is clearly stated in the application; and is unique from other applications submitted by the same applicant, when submitting multiple applications.
- The applicant has an active SAM.gov registration in good standing (not debarred or delinquent) for the duration of the review period.
- The applicant is an eligible entity as defined in 38 CFR 77.2.
- 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.
- The applicant is not in default by failing to meet the requirements for any previous Federal assistance.
- Proposed funding request is within \$750,000 cost ceiling.
- Administrative fees are within 5% of requested award.
- Inclusion of all required information in the grant application as specified by 38 U.S.C. 521A(c).

Administrative review applicant checklist can be found in [IX Appendix] for applicant use. The checklist can be used as a guide when preparing the application package to ensure that the application has met administrative screening criteria. Note that this checklist is only an aid for applicants and should not be included in the application package. If the application does not meet all of the screening criteria, the application will not move forward to the merit review process.

B. Merit Review:

Programmatic Plan (70 points)

- **Adaptive Sports Activities (10 points)**

Information is best displayed, but not limited to, VA Form 10096, Narrative and Program Specifics

- Adaptive sports activities to be provided are clearly stated on VA Form 10096
- Needed physical adaptations for target population are properly explained as applicable
- Equine therapy program includes a mental health component that is clearly stated
- Equine therapy activities are clearly targeted to address mental health
- Program does not include a clinical fee-for-service reimbursement
- Relevance and feasibility of the proposed plan are clearly demonstrated

- **Program Objectives and Design (15 points)**

Information is best displayed, but not limited to, the following documents: VA Form 10096, Narrative, Program Specifics

- Program's concept and objectives are clearly defined
 - Program elements are directly linked to the achievement of program objectives
 - Interest and need for proposed activities within program population is stated
 - Program concept is evidence-based related to sport and population. Program design is based on facts, good reasoning, sound judgement, and logic
 - Goals of the program are clearly stated
 - Objectives must be measurable and include a plan to track qualitative/quantitative results
- Deliverables are clearly and accurately defined
 - Each Deliverable describes the actual action and/or event to be implemented
 - Each Deliverable includes an expected number of veterans or trainers served
 - Locations and dates are clearly provided for each deliverable
 - Actions that do not serve attendees (such as purchasing of equipment) should be distributed amongst deliverables

- **Program Management (20 points)**

Information is best displayed, but not limited to, the following documents: VA Form 10096, Narrative, Program Specifics

- Program management structure is adequate to the successful conduct of the program
- Information regarding program background, qualifications, experience, and past performance (with particular focus on adaptive sports activities), and any service provision partners is clearly provided
- Primary staff holds a certification by an accredited program
- Experience working with equine programs is clearly stated
- Experience working with participants with mental health diagnoses is clearly stated
- Proposal demonstrates an understanding that award shall not reimburse medical services
- Partnerships and collaborating organizations are clearly defined and provide a clear benefit to implementation of the program
- Functions of key personnel are clearly explained
- Safety measures and policies are clearly stated

- **Capability for Successful Execution of Program (15 points)**

Information is best displayed, but not limited to, the following documents: Letters, VA Form 10096, Narrative, Program Past Performance, Program Specifics

- Communication/Outreach plan is clearly stated
- Ability to successfully implement the proposed program is clearly established
- Ability to recruit target population (Veterans with disabilities and Servicemembers with disabilities) is clearly defined.
- Organizations/groups are clearly evidenced.
- Timeframe is reasonable for successful execution of the proposed plan
- Significant experience in managing a large-scale equine therapy program, as defined in 38 CFR 77.2 and Section III. A of this NOFA, is clearly stated.
- Quality improvement plan is clearly defined

- **Partnerships (10 points)**

Information is best displayed, but not limited to, the following documents: Letters, VA Form 10096, Narrative, Program Specifics

- Communication/Outreach plan is clearly stated

- Relationships with VA Medical Centers, Department of Defense facilities, Veteran Service Organizations, and/or other Veterans is evidenced through Memorandum of Agreements and/or Letters of Support
- Responsibilities of partners and collaborating organizations are clearly stated

Financial Capability and Plan (30 points)

Information is displayed, but not limited to, the following documents: VA Form 10096, SF-424, SF-424A, Budget Justification, Narrative, Program Specifics

- **Capability (10 points)**

- Experience managing funds is clearly stated.
- Budget is appropriate for proposed program plan

- **Plan (10 points)**

- Budget is justified and clearly explained within the proposal. Cost per veteran is clearly stated in application and matches non-veteran costs.
- Budgeted costs are comparable to regional market value for similar goods and services. Costs adhere to GSA rates when applicable.
- Budgeted costs are reasonable, allocable and allowable under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E and produce good value for the amount of funds paid for proposed activities.
- Adaptive sports items and equipment should include specific cost estimates.
- A clear and specific budget breakdown is provided.

- **Reasonableness of Costs (10 Points)**

- Budgeted costs are reasonable, allowable and produce good value for the activities proposed to be undertaken.
- Budgeted costs are allocated only to Veteran participants.
- It is generally not considered reasonable to request to purchase vehicles or horses, however, grant funding to rent a wheelchair accessible van, bus, or truck would generally be considered reasonable.
- Costs including storage and/or leased space, farm equipment, equine boarding and equine supplies must include a strong justification and state allocability to the Equine Therapy Grant.
- The inclusion of mounted work should include a strong justification
- Travel funds of 20% or less of the total grant award are usual and customary. Travel funds greater than 20% of the total grant award

may be allowable but requires a detailed written justification in the required Narrative document (Section IV. B (4) of this NOFA).

- It is not authorized to use grant funding for travel for VA employees in official duty status.
- Budgeted costs should not be utilized to support athlete or staff travel to attend VA national rehabilitation events (National Veterans Wheelchair Games, National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, National Veterans Golden Age Games, National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic, National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic).

C. Programmatic Review:

- Merit review score
- If an applicant has an existing agreement with VA (e.g., Memorandum of Agreement), the application and agreement will be considered individually to ensure that services are not duplicated.
- Active agreements with VA (e.g. Memorandum of Agreement) to provide adaptive sports services or activities will be considered to optimize use of funding for grant awards, and to ensure that services are not duplicated.
- Relevance of application to the total grant funds allocated for equine therapy.
- Relevance of application to the total grant funds allocated for a specific type of activity.
- Relevance of application to the total grant funds allocated for a specific type of disability.
- The proposed program provides adaptive sports opportunities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited sports opportunities for disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces
- The proposed program provides an adaptive sports activity or adaptive sports activities that meet the current needs and priorities for disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

A. Federal Award Notices:

For grant applications that are selected for funding, NVSPSE will contact the applicants to enter into a grant agreement with VA. Payments will be made to the grant recipient in accordance with 38 CFR Part 77, 2 CFR Part 200 and other applicable provisions of this NOFA. Contact by NVSPSE prior to receipt and signature of the grant agreement does not confirm or suggest recommendation of funding is forthcoming. The grant agreement

is the verification of award and will be sent for signature via email to the point of contact indicated in the application.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

As a condition of receiving a grant, the applicant must agree to conduct a joint outreach campaign with VA as described in 38 CFR 77.11.

C. Reporting and Monitoring:

Upon execution of a grant agreement with VA, grantees will comply with requests from NVSPSE for provision of oversight and monitoring of adaptive sports activities as described in 38 CFR 77.16 and 38 CFR 77.18.

Reporting will be required quarterly and an annual report at award close-out. All reporting will be completed electronically. In these reports, grantees will be required to report data including, but not limited to: information on participants served, time spent providing adaptive sports activities, financial and acquisition data related to the grant, types of supportive services provided and other information as requested by NVSP&SE. Grantees must report on all activities funded by the Adaptive Sports Grant Program. Through all reporting, the grantee will be expected to demonstrate adherence to the grantee's proposed program concept, as described in the grantee's application.

Monitoring will consist of all grant recipients being subject to visits to monitor operations and compliance.

D. 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 a reimbursement basis as per guidance from the Office of Management and Budget.

E. PII (Personal Identifiable Information)

Applicants submitting applications in response to this NOFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the Department and must be observed except where disclosure is allowed by the prior written approval of the Grant Office or by court order. By submitting an application, applicants are assuring that all data exchanges conducted through or during the course of performance of this award will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable federal law.

F. Financial Risk:

Applicant confirms by acceptance of the award that the entity has Financial Management systems in place.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

VHA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420; grants4vets@va.gov. More resources that may assist with the application process can be found at www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/grant-program/.

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 submission deadline has passed, VA staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until all award notifications have been completed.

VIII. Appendix – Definitions:

For the purposes of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA):

Adaptive sport: a sport that has either been adapted specifically for persons with a disability or created specifically for persons with a disability.

Adaptive sports activity:

- (1) Instruction, participation, and competition in adaptive sports;
- (2) Training and technical assistance to program administrators, coaches, recreational therapists, instructors, Department 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.

Adaptive sports grant program: A program facilitated and managed by the NVSPSE that awards grants to qualifying organizations to plan, develop, manage, and implement programs to provide adaptive sports opportunities and equine therapy for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces as authorized under 38 United States Code 521A.

Note, this grant, funding opportunity number: VA-EQUINE-22, focuses solely on funding for Equine Therapy for mental health of Veterans.

Applicant: an eligible entity that submits an application for an adaptive sports grant announced in a NOFA.

Construction: construction, rehabilitation, alteration, conversion, extension, repair, or improvement of buildings, highways, or other real property.

DoD: the Department of Defense.

Eligible entity: a Non-Federal Government entity with significant experience in managing a large-scale adaptive sports program for persons with disabilities if those disabilities are those that many disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces have. To demonstrate significant experience, all the key personnel identified in the adaptive sports grant application of the entity must have experience implementing the adaptive sports activities to be provided and have experience working with persons with disabilities that many disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces to be served through the adaptive sports grant have. The experience must be for 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 sport activities, the entity applying for the adaptive sports grant must provide

documentation that verifies that through the partnership, it has the experience necessary to implement all of the adaptive sports activities proposed in the adaptive sports grant application.

Equine therapy: equine-assisted activities that address mental health

(1) Not to include equine activities that do not address mental health and are solely for the purpose of participation in sport.

Grantee: an entity that is awarded an adaptive sports grant under this part.

Large-scale adaptive sports program:

(1) An adaptive sports program of a National Paralympic Committee (NPC) or of a National Governing Body (NGB) that is authorized to provide Paralympic sports programs in one or more States;

(2) An adaptive sports program of a NGB that has been recognized by an external validating authority if the programs validated by that authority would meet the requirements of paragraph (3) of this definition if considered one program; and

(3) An adaptive sports program in which at least 50 persons with disabilities participate or in which the persons with disabilities who participate in the program reside in at least five different congressional districts.

National Governing Body (NGB): an organization that looks after all aspects of a sport and is responsible for training, competition and development for their sports.

National Paralympic Committee (NPC): the national organization recognized by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as the sole representative of athletes with disabilities from their respective jurisdiction.

Notice of funding availability (NOFA): a Notice of Funding Availability published in the OMB-designated government-wide Web site in accordance with 38 CFR 77.13 and 2 CFR Part 200.

Paralympics: a series of international contests for athletes with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities, including mobility disabilities, amputations, blindness, and traumatic brain injury, that are associated with and held following the summer and winter Olympic Games.

Participant: a disabled veteran or disabled member of the Armed Forces who is receiving adaptive sport activities from a grantee.

Partnership: any type of arrangement in which the parties agree to cooperate and is not limited to a legal partnership.

Personal Identifiable Information (PII): Any representation of information that permits the identity of an individual to whom the information applies to be reasonably inferred by either direct or indirect means.

Persons with a disability: includes persons with physical disabilities or mental health diagnoses.

Sport: a usually competitive individual or group physical activity governed by a set of rules or customs, which, through casual or organized participation, aim to use, maintain or improve physical ability and skills while normally providing entertainment to participants.

VA: the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Veteran: a person described in section 3.1 of Title 38, United States Code

Veterans Service Organization (VSO): an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of Title 38, United States Code, a subgroup of such an organization, or a nonprofit entity registered with the U.S. Government that has a primary mission to provide services to veterans and members of the Armed Services.

(Authority: [Pub. L. 111-163](#), [38 U.S.C. 501](#) [38 CFR Part 77](#))

IX. Appendix – Administrative Checklist:²

Application Requirement	Complete?
The deadline submission requirements are met	
All required components of the application are appropriately titled and saved in the specified formats and submitted through Grants.gov, (the VA will attempt to open documents, but will not troubleshoot any problems related to opening files)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF-424 (Completed and signed), Application for Federal Assistance 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF-424A, Budget Information Form 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA Form 10091 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA Form 10096 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Past Performance 	
Applicant has an active SAM.gov registration in good standing (not debarred or delinquent) for the duration of the review period	
Technical Proposal (meeting requirements)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is stated 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative (not exceeding 10 pages) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past performance (not exceeding 1 page) 	
Application does not exceed the ceiling amount of \$750,000 total costs	
Admin costs do not exceed 5% of the budget	

² The checklist is not an exhaustive guide, but only an assistance tool. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met and that all materials are complete in accordance with the entirety of the NOFO.