



Office of Community Engagement 2020 VHA Community Partnership Challenge: Kickoff Announcement

December 2, 2019

2020 VHA Community Partnership Challenge

The Office of Community Engagement is pleased to announce the 2020 Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Community Partnership Challenge. The contest is an opportunity to highlight nonmonetary, community partnerships between VHA and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

This year's contest theme is ***The Social Determinants of Health***. Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Proactive approaches to support social determinants of health are associated with improved health and well-being at both the individual and community level. Each submission to this year's contest should show how a particular partnership benefits Veterans and advances VA's mission by addressing one of six social determinants of health that are the focus for this year's contest:

- 1. Education:** The partnership demonstrates that it brings to Veterans or increases their access to affordable, convenient, and safe education, training, or skill development opportunities.
- 2. Employment:** The partnership demonstrates that it brings to Veterans or increases their access to opportunities for safe temporary or permanent employment.
- 3. Food Security:** The partnership demonstrates that it brings to Veterans or increases their access to sufficient, safe, accessible, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.
- 4. Housing:** The partnership demonstrates that it brings to Veterans or increases their access to resources that aid them in procuring permanent or temporary, affordable, and safe housing and/or shelter.
- 5. Spiritual Support:** The partnership demonstrates that it brings to Veterans or increases their access to support from spiritual leaders, religious officials, healers, or faith-based organizations as well as opportunities for participation in activities, observances, or communities related to spiritual health, beliefs, or religion.
- 6. Transportation:** The partnership demonstrates that it brings to Veterans or increases their access to accessible, affordable, and safe transportation options for moving around within or traveling to and from their communities.



There are thousands of successful partnerships taking place across VHA. Strategic partnerships are force multipliers that help meet Veterans' needs, from addressing homelessness and food insecurity to offering music or art therapy, expanding mental health care services, and more. Partnerships also bridge gaps where VA does not provide a particular service.

We invite staff members to enter the VHA Community Partnership Challenge by submitting an entry to our contest portal with a description of how their team's partnership with an NGO provides value to VA and Veterans. Any VHA employee may submit a contest entry for a partnership established by a Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), VHA facility, Community-Based Outpatient Clinic, Vet Center, VHA program office, or other VHA entity. The entry must be cleared by relevant VISN, medical center, Vet Center, and/or program office leaders prior to submission. Be sure to include hyperlinks to articles, photographs, or videos to help "tell the story" of your partnership. **We want to celebrate your success and showcase your demonstration of the social determinants of health!**

The top three entries will be announced in **May 2020**. The Under Secretary for Health/Executive in Charge will recognize the winning partnerships during a formal awards ceremony, in which the winners will receive the coveted VHA Community Partnership Award. Winning entries will also be widely publicized.

Portal is open for submissions December 2, 2019 through January 31, 2020

For details and to submit your entry, visit <http://vaww.oce.med.va.gov/pc/pcWelcome.aspx>.

For additional information or if you have questions, please contact the VHA Office of Community Engagement at CommunityEngagement@va.gov.

Read about last year's winners at <http://vaww.oce.med.va.gov/PartChllng2019.aspx>

Thank you,

The Office of Community Engagement