

VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships and the Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network

How communities can support Veteran reentry to civilian life

The Veteran Health Administration (VHA)'s **Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network (VSPN)** initiative, led by the VHA [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships \(HAP\)](#), is based on the model of the [Department of Defense \(DOD\) sponsorship program](#). As part of this initiative, Veterans, Veteran spouses, and the community that supports Veterans and service members are volunteering as sponsors to support service members throughout their transition back into civilian communities. Keep reading to learn more about the role community organizations play, as well as the benefits of joining this network and how to help support service members, Veterans, and their families.

Why become part of the VSPN?

HAP created the VSPN initiative to leverage the power of non-monetary partnerships to help transitioning service members, Veterans, and their families access Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services and community resources, such as employment opportunities, education benefits, housing assistance, and more. Partnering with VHA means community organizations at the local, regional, and national level have the chance to fulfill two critical roles in the VSPN initiative:

- Provide service members and Veterans with information on local community resources so that they can access resources pre-, during, and post-transition
- Facilitate the pairing of trained sponsors with service members and recently separated Veterans prior to DOD separation



Early research indicates engaging in VHA care with community-based interventions and sponsorship programs can help Veterans achieve better outcomes across social determinants of health (such as employment, financial stability, and physical well-being), experience less difficulty when transitioning back into civilian communities, and reduce risk factors related to Veteran death by suicide. Together, community partners and VA help Veterans access quality benefits, health care, and accessible services the way they want to receive them.

Who can become a community partner?

Any type of Veteran-serving organization can become a VSPN community partner. Partnerships may be county-specific, statewide, or nationwide. To be successful in the role, organizations should have the capabilities to fulfill the two critical roles of providing service members with local resources and facilitating sponsor-Veteran pairings.

VHA recommends the use of a digital platform to identify and communicate community resources to service members prior to DOD separation. Service members should be able to identify and get contact information about community resources from the community partner.

Organizations that wish to partner with VHA may already have volunteers. Free sponsor training developed by VA is available to VSPN community partner volunteers or staff.

Benefits for service members and Veterans

- Veterans and service members who have support (such as a sponsor or easy access to community resources) experience less stress and have better outcomes during the transition back into civilian communities.
- Supporting service members, Veterans, and their families is one way many Veterans like to give back to their community and is a great volunteer activity for Veteran-focused community organizations.
- Easy access to sponsors and community resources can make an area more appealing to other service members and their families choosing where to live.
- Sponsors help guide Veterans through action plans and form a social support network, which can help not only Veterans, but also the Veteran's spouse, children, and extended family feel welcome and get engaged in their new community.

Partner responsibilities

- Community partners sign a nonmonetary Memorandum of Understanding with a regional VHA office to coordinate roles, responsibilities, and engagement with Veterans.

- Community partners match sponsors with incoming Veterans and introduce them to each other.
- Community partners provide a digital platform or resource to facilitate coordination between sponsors and service members and to inform service members about local community resources and programs.
- Community partners recruit a pool of sponsors to pair with incoming Veterans who receive VA vetted sponsor training.
- Community partners refer service members and Veterans to VA for services and benefits upon request. Community partners also reach out to VA for guidance when a Veteran requires acute care or crisis management.

Healthcare Advancement Initiatives led by HAP

VHA HAP's mission is to ensure **partnerships and health care advancements support Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors across social determinants of health.**



To learn more about VHA partnerships, please visit: va.gov/healthpartnerships.