

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-ASP-2015-01

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) Program Office by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 11, 2014. Awards made for adaptive sports activities grants will fund operations over a 1-year period beginning October 1, 2014.

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

ADDRESSES:

Submission of Application Package: The ASG grant application form package for funding opportunity VA-ASP-2015-01 is available through Grants.Gov

(<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>) and listed as VA-Adaptive Sports

Programs. The application form package also is submitted through Grants.Gov to

Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (002C), Suite 912D,

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 for transmittal to the NVSP&SE Program Office 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 package as described

under 38 CFR 77.6. For procedures to submit an amendment to an existing submitted

grant application package, contact the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and

Special Events (002C), Suite 912D, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont

Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20420.

Technical Assistance: Information regarding how to obtain technical assistance

with the preparation of an initial ASG Program grant application is available on the

NVSP&SE Program Web site at:

http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_grant_program.asp.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael F. Welch, Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (002C), Suite 912D, 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 or 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 provide adaptive sports activities that meet the current needs and priorities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces as described in the ASG Program goals and objectives and provides adaptive sports

activities in geographic regions where VA has identified limited sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces 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 disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. 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 either through formal agreements or the informal working relationships commonly found amongst adaptive sports entities, VSOs and other entities providing adaptive sport services for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces to be served by the grantee. As part of the application, under 77.5(a)(5), all applicants will provide letters of support from any partners which will deliver services that reflect the applicant's engagement in providing adaptive sports activities. Assistance in developing ongoing rehabilitative, therapeutic, and wholelife health adaptive sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces is a fundamental goal of the ASG Program. For planning purposes, the ASG Program is not intended to provide long-term adaptive sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. The ASG 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 recently amended by the VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2013, Public Law 113-59. 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 adaptive sports program 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 adaptive sports grants awarded under this NOFA:

(1) Grantees may use up to a maximum of 7.5 percent of ASG grant funds for administrative costs identified in § 77.14(c)(ii).

(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. There will be no renewal grants to provide adaptive sports activities considered under this NOFA. Up to \$8 million will be available through this NOFA.

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

VA will provide up to \$8 million over a 1-year period for initial grants to eligible entities proposing adaptive sports activities listed under I.A. above. There are no renewable grant opportunities under this NOFA.

C. *Allocation of Funds*: Funding will be awarded under this NOFA to grantees for a 1-year period. The following requirements apply to adaptive sports activities 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 1-year period.

III. Eligibility Information

A. *Eligible Applicants*: In order 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 those that 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 sports activities, the entity applying for the adaptive sports grant must provide signed 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.

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

C. *Other*: To be an eligible entity for the ASG Program, an entity must be in compliance with 2 CFR 200 criteria for a Non-Federal entity eligible for federal grant programs. For example, if entities that have been found to be in violation of a particular Federal statute that would preclude said entity from receipt of federal grant funds, that entity is ineligible and will not be considered for award of an ASG grant. Because the ASG Program provides adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces, adaptive sports programs that do not result in providing adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces will not be considered eligible for grant 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 or vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov. For detailed ASG Program information and requirements, see 38 CFR Part 77.

B. *Content and Form of Application*: The VA-Adaptive Sports Program application package format provided under Grants.Gov Opportunity Number VA-ASP-

2015-01 contains electronic versions of the application forms that are required, including SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B. Additional attachments may be provided. 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.

C. Submission Dates and Times: Applications for adaptive sports program grants under the ASG Program must be submitted through Grants.Gov to be provided to the NVSP&SE Program Office by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on August 11, 2014. Awards made for ASG Program grants will fund operations for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2014. 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 take this practice into account and make early submission of their materials to avoid any 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 \$8 million will be awarded for initial adaptive sports activities grants to be funded under this NOFA for a 1-year period. 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 the 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.(1)

F. *Other Submission Requirements:*

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

(a) *Renewals.* After receiving an initial grant, grantees may apply for a renewal grant if the grantee's program will remain substantially the same.

Because of the transition from the United States Paralympics Integrated Adaptive Sports Program grant system (Paralympic grant) to the ASG Program as authorized under Public Law 113-59 (December 2013) and the implementing regulations, although there may be ASG Program grant applications very similar to subgrants awarded under the Paralympic grant, no grant application will be evaluated as a renewal application under this NOFA.

(b) *New Applicants*. Eligible entities may apply for funding as new applicants using the application designed for initial grants.

(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: Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (002C), Suite 912D, 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;
 - (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 an initial adaptive sports program grant:

(a) VA will award up to 5 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 20 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 20 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 5 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. The VA Sport Club Finder (http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports/va_clubFinder.asp) provides a geographic representation of the distribution of registered adaptive sports entities that provide adaptive sports opportunities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. The VA Sport Club Finder identifies 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 15 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 disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Grant applications will be evaluated on how well the ASG Program grant application explains 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 can be found 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:

1. VA will 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.

4. VA will fund the highest-ranked applications for which funding is available.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

A. *Award Notices:* Although subject to change, the NVSP&SE Program Office expects to announce grant recipients by mid-September, 2014. Prior to executing a funding agreement, VA will contact the applicants and make known the amount of proposed funding and verify the applicant still would like 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 and other applicable provisions of this NOFA.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

It is VA's policy to support adaptive sports outreach programs that facilitate providing adaptive sports opportunities in recreational, rehabilitative, therapeutic and wholelife health adaptive sports activities at the introductory through elite levels of participation for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. VA's adaptive sports outreach networks involve interagency and eligible Non-Federal

adaptive sports entities at the national, regional and community-based levels and incorporate a variety of outreach tools including web-based products.

In order to qualify for an adaptive sports grant, grantees are expected to offer outreach programs as described in 38 CFR 77.11. In addition, consistent with the VA's adaptive sports outreach programs' goals, grantees are expected to 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 disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces 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 under the Adaptive Sports Grant Program.

Applicants should be aware of the following:

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

2. Grantees will be required to enter data into a VA Web-based software application. This data will consist of information on the participants served and types of supportive services provided by grantees. 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 wholelife health.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

A. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael F. Welch, Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (002C), Suite 912D, 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 or vacoadaptiveSP@va.gov.

All correspondence with the 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, the 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 wholelife health of disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces 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. Payment methods must minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the United States Treasury and the disbursement by the ASG Program grant recipient.