

**Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant Program  
2013-2015 Grant Award Program  
Applicant Instruction Manual**



**Applications Due: December 31, 2013**

**Grant Period: February 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015**

**Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs**

700 Summer St NE | Salem, OR 97301-1285

Contact: Eric Belt (503) 373-2249 [eric.belt@state.or.us](mailto:eric.belt@state.or.us)

This page intentionally left blank.

# Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Section 1: The 2013-2015 Grant Program</b>	
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 2013 Budget Note To ODVA's 2013-15 Budget	5
1.3 Eligible Applicants	6
1.4 Types Of Eligible Projects And Examples	6
1.5 Measuring Outcomes, Generally	7
1.6 Measuring An Increase in The Number Of New POAs and an Increase In Federal Benefit Dollars	8
1.7 Measuring All Other Grant Proposal Goals	9
1.8 Reporting Measurable Outcomes	9
1.9 Types Of Ineligible Projects	10
<b>Section 2: How to Apply</b>	
2.1 Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant Application Form	11
2.2 Application Submission Deadline	11
2.3 Application Submission Procedure	11
<b>Section 3: Project Selection</b>	
3.1 Technical Review	11
3.2 Evaluation By Committee	12
3.3 Scoring Criteria. 100 Total Points	12
3.4 Total Funds Available	12
<b>Section 4: Cost Principles</b>	
4.1 Allowable Costs	13
4.2 Ineligible Costs	13
<b>Section 5: Disbursement, Recovery of Funds and Recordkeeping</b>	
5.1 Disbursements Of Grant Funds	13
5.2 Recovery Of Grant Funds	13
5.3 Recordkeeping	13
<b>Section 6: Grant Agreements</b>	
6.1 Grant Agreements, Generally	13

## **Section 1: The 2013-2015 Grant Program**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

#### Mission of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Oregon Department of Veteran's Affairs (ODVA), with the support of our citizens, recognizes and honors Oregon's veterans and their families by providing the highest quality programs, service and benefits. ODVA, where every day is Veterans' Day!

#### County Veterans Service Officers

County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) work with veterans to identify benefits that are available to them and to assist veterans in filing their federal claims. CVSOs are accredited by the federal VA and certified by the ODVA.

#### Veterans Extended Outreach Grant Program

During the 2013 Legislative Session, ODVA was allocated \$1 million dollars in additional funds to develop a Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant Program (VEOGP) for the 2013-15 biennium. Of these funds, a total of \$10,000 was granted to 34 counties, for a total of \$340,000 and ODVA will retain up to \$60,000 (which includes a 2% holdback of \$20,000) for the ODVA Portland claims office to handle the increased claims-related work.

ODVA will grant the remaining \$600,000 through a competitive grant application and award process to CVSOs. This instruction manual addresses the requirements for applying for a competitive grant, selection criteria, performance measures, grant disbursement and recovery, recordkeeping requirements, and grant agreements under the VEOGP.

The Legislature wrote a special "budget note" to ODVA when they allocated the funds. A budget note is a formal directive to a state agency expressing legislative intent for a particular budget issue. The budget note provided specific instructions to ODVA on the purposes of the grant program and the Legislature's expectations for outcomes and results.

#### Note for Grant Proposers

It is important to read and be familiar with the grant program guidelines and requirements. This manual includes state policies, procedures, instructions, and grant criteria to assist applicants wishing to participate in the Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant program. ODVA is available to provide assistance to applicants.

## 1.2 2013 BUDGET NOTE TO ODVA's 2013-15 BUDGET

The Legislative budget note to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs outlined the grant application, outcome measures, and review requirements for the \$600,000 competitive grant program. The key requirements for the grant program include:

- ODVA must develop the Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant program to guide the allocation of an additional \$1 million in support for County Veterans' Service Offices.
- The goals of the grant program are to:
  - Serve veterans statewide to greatest effect
  - Improve outreach to veterans
  - Inform them of their benefits
  - File claims on behalf of veterans
- The \$600,000 in additional grant funds to the CVSOs must supplement and not supplant existing services to veterans provided by counties.
- Accountability and measurable outcomes must result from the grant funds.
- Outcomes for the grants shall include, but shall not be limited to:
  - Increase the number of new power of attorneys granted to CVSOs; and
  - Increase the amount of new federal benefit dollars recovered on behalf of Oregon veterans.
- No less than \$600,000 shall be disbursed in the form of competitive grants.
- A committee shall evaluate proposals for competitive grants. The committee shall consist of the following:
  - Two employees of ODVA, appointed by the Director
  - Two County Veteran Service Officers representing one urban region and one rural region chosen by the Director in consultation with the County Veteran Service Officer Association
  - One member of the Veterans Advisory Committee, to be chosen by the Chair of the Veterans Advisory Committee.

### **Other grant funds included in the budget note**

In addition to the \$600,000 in the competitive grant program, the budget note stated that:

- A base of \$10,000 to each eligible county shall be granted. Note: ODVA granted \$10,000 to 34 eligible counties, for a total of \$340,000, in the summer of 2013.
- Outcomes for the \$10,000 grants shall include, but shall not be limited to:
  - Increasing the number of new power of attorneys granted to CVSOs; and
  - Increasing the amount of new federal benefit dollars recovered on behalf of Oregon veterans.
- ODVA may retain a portion for administrative expenses resulting from additional claims that are generated. Note: ODVA retained \$60,000 (which includes a 2%

holdback of \$20,000) for the ODVA Portland claims office during the summer of 2013.

### **1.3 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

#### Individual CVSOs

Only County Veteran Service Offices are eligible to apply. The following individuals must also sign both a) the grant application; and b) the final grant agreement:

- The authorized county veterans service officer; and
- The appointing authority of the county or the authorized signer for the CVSO operating agency.

#### Joint Projects: Multiple CVSOs

CVSOs may work together and submit grant proposals demonstrating that they are working with other CVSOs. However, grants must be submitted by each CVSO and funds will be made only to individual CVSOs.

If multiple CVSOs work together, clearly state this on the individual grant proposals and they will be considered jointly by the evaluation and award committee.

### **1.4 TYPES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND EXAMPLES**

The budget note states:

The goals of the program shall be to serve veterans statewide to greatest effect, to improve outreach to veterans, to inform them of their benefits, and to file claims on their behalf.

It is the Legislature's intent that the additional investment shall supplement and not supplant existing services to veterans provided by counties, and that from the additional investment, accountability and measurable outcomes result.

Outcomes shall include, but shall not be limited to, the number of new power of attorneys granted to County Veteran Service Officers and the amount of new federal benefit dollars recovered on behalf of Oregon veterans.

The purpose of the grants is to increase the number of new power of attorneys granted to CVSOs, which should result in an increase in the number of new federal veteran benefit dollars recovered in Oregon. Therefore, eligible grants will be required to have measurable outcomes that meet this purpose.

Eligible projects must supplement and not supplant the current work and funding for the CVSO.

## **Measurable Outcomes**

Eligible projects must include both of the following measurable outcomes (see section 1.5 below, "Measuring Outcomes"):

- The number of new power of attorneys granted to the County Veterans Service Office; and
- The amount of new federal benefit dollars recovered on behalf of Oregon veterans.

Grant applicants must include additional measurable activities that will ultimately result in new power of attorneys (POAs) granted. These will give CVSOs, ODVA and the Legislature good data on the projects that actually increase the number of POAs. Examples might include:

- Increase in-office interviews by 10% compared to the previous year.
- Increase out-of-office interviews by 10% compared to the previous year.
- Increase the number of telephone contacts to the CVSO office from veterans compared to the previous year.
- Increase radio advertising by 50% from previous year.
- Increase from quarterly out-of-office outreach to bi-monthly.

### **Some examples of possible projects:**

- Expand advertising by purchasing billboard to attract and inform veterans.
- Purchase radio advertising to target veterans who have not applied for full benefits.
- Hire a part-time assistant to answer basic questions, set up appointments, and help with outreach efforts,
- Expand outreach efforts to include senior living facilities and make regularly scheduled visits.
- Hire additional administrative staff
- Expand the geographic base of the current CVSO office by travelling to specific outreach locations
- Provide educational presentations on veterans' benefits and outreach at senior centers, homeless shelters, schools and non-profit centers
- Work with veterans the CVSO has helped with health benefits and encourage them to sign a POA

## **1.5 MEASURING OUTCOMES, GENERALLY**

Grant proposals will measure two types of outcomes:

1. Principal measures: The number of POAs and the amount of federal benefit dollars.
2. Supporting measures: The goals and outcomes for the specific actions that will be taken as stated in the grant proposal. A grant proposal may have multiple measurable outcomes. For example:

“Goal 1: To increase in the number of out-of-office outreach activities to senior facilities and community colleges from current level of four activities each year to eight activities each year.”

“Goal 2: To increase the number of calls to the CVSO office from the current level of 10 per day to 14 per day.”

## **1.6 MEASURING AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF NEW POAs AND AN INCREASE IN FEDERAL BENEFIT DOLLARS**

A grant proposal must state the current number of POAs and the Federal benefit dollar amount and the goal for each of these over the 17-month grant period.

All data used in measuring this outcome will be collected directly from VetraSpec and no other source.

- ODVA, using Vetraspec, will provide all counties with the data on number of new POAs and Federal benefit dollars. Grant applicants will use these numbers as a baseline in the grant application. Grant applicants must establish goals to increase these numbers and provide the goals in the grant application.
- The CVSO grantee, using data from VetraSpec, will be responsible for reporting the increase in new POAs and new Federal benefit dollars to ODVA on a quarterly basis.

**By November 5, 2013, the ODVA will provide each CVSO with the number of new POAs granted to that county and the amount of federal dollars during the 17-month period from June 1, 2012 through October 31, 2013. ODVA will obtain this data from VetraSpec.**

**The applicant must include these numbers as a baseline for the outcome measure on the grant application.**

EXAMPLE:

ODVA will provide the CVSO/county with the following data from VetraSpec:

ABC County received 24 new POAs and \$1.5 million Federal dollars were awarded to veterans in that county during the 17-month period between June 1, 2012 and October 31, 2013.



Goal: The CVSO wants to use the grant funds to increase the number of POAs by 15% (increase from 24 to 28) and increase the number of federal dollars by 15%. The grant application will read:

“The goal of the grant is to increase number of new POAs granted by 15%

- Number of new POAs from 6/1/2012 to 10/31/2013: 24
- Projected new POAs from 2/1/14 to 6/30/15: 28
- Percentage increase: 15%

The goal of the grant is to increase number federal dollars by 10%

- Federal dollars from 6/1/2012 to 10/31/2013: \$1.5 million
- Projected new federal dollars 2/1/14 to 6/30/15: \$1.65 Million
- Percentage increase: 10%

## **1.7 MEASURING ALL OTHER GRANT PROPOSAL GOALS**

Grant applications must include at least one measurable goal that is not a measure of new POAs or Federal dollars. Each goal must state a baseline number and a goal number. Make sure that the goal is measurable and that it will be easy to track.

For example:

“Goal 1: To increase in the number of out-of-office outreach activities to senior facilities and community colleges from current level of four activities each year to eight activities each year, for a total of 12 activities during the 17-month grant cycle.”

“Goal 2: To increase the number of calls to the CVSO office from the current level of 10 per day to 14 per day.”

## **1.8 REPORTING MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**

Reporting Periods. There are two measurable outcome reporting periods for the increase in the number of POAs and the increase in federal dollars. The first period is to provide a progress report to the Legislature. The second period is the end of the grant cycle. Each grantee must report to ODVA on the measurable outcomes at these times.

- February 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014. Due January 31, 2015
- February 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. Due July 31, 2015

## **1. Outcome Reporting Period One: Progress Report to Legislature**

February 1, 2014 (funds awarded) to December 31, 2014 (11 Months).

The purpose of this period is for ODVA to provide a progress report on the outcomes of the grant program to the 2015 Legislative Assembly.

This is an 11-month period and the measure is the number of the new POAs granted and increase in federal dollars. ODVA will need to report to the 2015 Legislature on the grant funds. Therefore, ODVA will need these outcome numbers from grantees no later than January 31, 2015 to be able to make a report to the Legislature early in the 2015 session.

Report will include the measurable outcomes for both:

- New POAs and Federal dollars
- Grant-specific outcome measure

**Report due to ODVA: January 31, 2015**

## **2. Outcome Reporting Period Two: Final Outcome. 17-Month Period**

February 1, 2014 (date funds awarded) to June 30, 2015 (end of the grant cycle)

The purpose of this reporting period is that February 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 is the entire period of the grant cycle. ODVA will need to report on the final outcome of the grant program to the Legislature in the Fall of 2015.

**Report due to ODVA: July 31, 2015**

## **1.9 TYPES OF INELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

A project must supplement the current work of the CVSOS. It may not supplant funds allocated to CVSOS.

Projects that include funds for certification and training for CVSOS are not eligible for grants.

Projects must have measurable outcomes. Projects that do not have targeted goals and those that do not state measurable outcomes are not eligible.

## **Section 2: How to Apply**

### **2.1 VETERANS' EXTENDED OUTREACH GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

A CVSO must submit a Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant Application. The information submitted on the form is summarized below.

- Applicant information
- Contact information
- Project summary
- Grant amount requested
- Grant narrative, which is a two-page document including:
  - Project description, including how the grant will extend current operations
  - Project outcomes for increasing new power of attorneys granted, with baseline data supplied by ODVA
  - Other project outcomes
  - Project timeline, including implementation plan and reporting to ODVA on outcomes
  - Budget narrative describing the appropriateness of each budget item expense
- Budget, including a breakdown by category and description of cost
- Authorization. Signature of the CVSO, plus the signature of the appointing authority in the county OR of the authorized signer for the CVSO operating agency.

### **2.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

Applications must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2013.

### **2.3 APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

Applications must be mailed to:

Eric Belt | Veterans' Extended Outreach Grant Program  
Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs  
700 Summer St NE | Salem, OR 97301-1285

## **Section 3: Project Selection**

### **3.1 TECHNICAL REVIEW**

ODVA staff will conduct a technical review of all applications for completeness and eligibility. Prior to determining the status of each grant application, ODVA will contact individual grant applicants to clear up mistakes or discrepancies.

### **3.2 EVALUATION BY COMMITTEE**

The following committee shall evaluate proposals for the competitive grants:

- Two employees of ODVA, appointed by the Director
- Two County Veteran Service Officers representing one urban region and one rural region chosen by the Director in consultation with the County Veteran Service Officer Association
- One member of the Veterans Advisory Committee, to be chosen by the Chair of the Veterans Advisory Committee.

The committee will meet no later than January 15, 2014 to evaluate grant applications.

### **3.3 SCORING CRITERIA. 100 TOTAL POINTS**

#### **40 Points**

Criteria: The extent that the grant application aligns with the purposes of increasing the number of power of attorneys granted; the justification provided demonstrating why the program will be successful; and the collection of data and projected outcome that will demonstrate results.

#### **40 Points**

Criteria: The strength of the detailed implementation plan, timeline and budget. The implementation plan must state who will do the work, when the work will be done, where the work will be done, and how the goals will be accomplished. The budget and narrative must clearly state the expenses for categories and the reasonableness of the cost stated.

#### **20 Points**

Criteria: Discretion of committee members. Committee membership is representative of agencies, geographical regions and communities. These points allows for each members to weigh a variety of other factors in the scoring process.

### **3.4 TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE**

The evaluating committee will also consider the total amount of available grant funds, which is \$600,000, and the total dollar amount of all grant applications.

## **Section 4: Cost Principles**

### **4.1 ALLOWABLE COSTS**

The only allowable costs are those costs specifically stated in the grant application.

## **4.2 INELIGIBLE COSTS**

Grant funds may not be spent to supplant any existing funds allocated to the CVSO. Grant funds may not be expended on items not specifically stated in the grant application. Grant funds may not be spent on training costs associated with accreditation of a CVSO.

## **Section 5: Disbursements and Recovery of Funds, Recordkeeping and Auditing**

### **5.1 DISBURSEMENTS OF GRANT FUNDS**

ODVA will mail grant funds to grantees selected by the grant committee no later than February 1, 2014.

### **5.2 RECOVERY OF GRANT FUNDS**

Grantees who fail to complete approved projects shall return all unexpended grant funds. Grant funds not expended by June 30, 2015 must be returned to ODVA.

### **5.3 RECORDKEEPING**

Grantees shall maintain records adequate for audit purposes for a period of not less than five years after project completion and shall reimburse ODVA for any costs questioned in audit findings. Grantees shall have an opportunity to present information and documentation regarding such findings.

## **Section 6: Grant Agreements**

### **6.1 GRANT AGREEMENTS, GENERALLY**

The Grant Agreement is a contract between ODVA and the grantee, which authorizes the project to begin on, or after the date signed by all parties including ODVA and either the CVSO grantee and the appointing authority of the county director or the authorized signer for the operating agency. The Agreement describes the contractual relationship and responsibilities of the parties to the project.

No project may begin without a fully signed Agreement from ODVA. A Notice to Proceed will be sent with the fully signed Agreements and funds will be disbursed. All project costs must be incurred during the project period, as identified in the Agreement.

