Technical Assistance Guide

for 2nd & 3rd Optional Year Funding Grant Modifications

for Competitive Grants

I. Determining Eligibility for Optional Year Funding:

In all Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGAs) for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) and Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP), it will indicate if optional year funding will be made available.

Usually, we allow for two (2) optional years of funding provided satisfactory grantee performance in the previous performance period and sufficient available funding. We usually automatically set aside funding to support 2nd and 3rd optional year funding upon receipt of program allocations.

Grantees do not have to compete for 2nd and 3rd optional year funding as they have already successfully competed for these funds with their initial grant award. A list of HVRP and VWIP grantees that are eligible to apply for 2nd or 3rd year funding is provided in Attachments 1 and 2.

II. How does an eligible HVRP/VWIP grantee apply for 2nd or 3rd Optional Year Funding?

A. To request any type of HVRP or VWIP grant modification the following forms and information must be submitted by the eligible grantees to the Director for Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DVET)/Grant Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) in their respective State (see web site address in Section V. 1. below).

B. What forms and documents are required for a Grant Modification Request?

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE GRANT APPLICANT:

1. **Transmittal memo** with an original signature requesting the 2nd or 3rd optional year funding that specifies the name of the authorized representative who is able to enter into this grant agreement with the Department of Labor. Grantee may also indicate if there are any significant changes to the grant agreement.

2. **A SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance** (see Attachment 3)

with original signature reflecting the original start date of the grant (July 1, 2006 for the E-9-5-6 grants and July 1, 2007 for the HV numbered grants) thru June 30, 2009, and indicating that this is a "revision" of an existing grant to "increase award" and "increase duration". The SF 424 is also to identify the total amount of projected funding needed to continue operations for the new 12 month performance period **not to exceed the original grant award.** The grantee can request less funding than what was originally awarded but not more.

3. **A SF 424A Budget Information** (see Attachment 4) showing four (4) new quarters of funding. The funding on the SF 424A must crosswalk and equal the funds requested on the SF 424, budget narrative, and Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-Applicants. There will be no carryover funds; all PY 2007 funds must be obligated by June 30, 2008, to include funds necessary to perform all participant follow-up activities.

4. **If components remain unchanged**, reference may be provided by the eligible grantee in their transmittal memo that, "**this request is a continuation of current program as originally approved in PY 2006 or PY 2007**" without an additional narrative.

Otherwise, **if major program changes are being requested**, a program narrative is required, including a statement of need, program design, program goals, qualifications, utilization of community linkages, and budget information. Requested program changes must clearly identify program activity, program efficiency, or resolve problems which have been identified during PY 2007 program operations.

5. **A Budget Narrative** that crosswalks and equals the funds requested on the SF 424 and SF 424A that explains each of the SF 424A budget line items, how the funds will be used including a Direct Cost Descriptions for Applicants and Sub-Applicants, and the methodologies used to determine the budget line item expenditures. For example: $100 in planned travel expenditures for privately owned vehicle reimbursement of 44.5 cents per mile for approximately 225 miles.

6. **Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-Applicants** (see Attachment 5) that crosswalks and equals the total amount requested on the SF 424, SF 424A, and Budget Narrative.

7. **A Recommended Format for Planned Common Measures Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Chart** (see Attachment 6) that is equal to or exceeds the first or second year pertinent final goals unless an explanation and justification is provided to verify that first or second year pertinent final goals were unattainable due to circumstances beyond the grantees control. **Please note that funding may be reduced if**

proposed second or third year pertinent final goals are reduced.

8. **All certifications and assurances remain in effect throughout the duration of the grant.** The grantee continues to be bound by these when accepting the second or third optional year grant award. However, if the grantee representative authorized to engage in this type of grant activity has changed, then the grantee must submit a new original signed certification and assurances form and indicate in their cover letter of the change (see Attachment 7).

9. **Actual technical and financial performance reports for the period ending March 31, 2008**, are to be submitted with their grant applications (printing a "hardcopy" of VOPAR reports and/or Common Measures spreadsheet data is acceptable). If technical performance and/or financial data are unavailable at the time of application, the grantee is to provide actual performance reports to DVET/GOTR as soon as possible but no later than May 15th, 2008.

10. **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement form is to be completed by all grantees**. If a grantee is charging indirect costs they must submit a copy of the approval of their indirect cost rate for the subject performance period and include the methodologies used. Note: The Grant Officer will not award funding if they do not have a copy of the indirect approval letter for the specific grant period or the letter requesting an indirect cost rate.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE DVET/GOTR/RAVET:

11. **DVET recommendation memorandum and Grant Review Checklist** (see Attachment 9).

12. **Goals Comparison Spreadsheet** (see Attachment 8) noting any justifications for deviations.

13. **DVET/GOTR On-Site Monitoring Report, if applicable** and if not, reason(s) for not performing the on-site evaluation explained in the DVET recommendation memorandum.

14. **RAVET recommendation memorandum and Grant Review Checklist** (see Attachment 9).

C. Where are the Grant Application Forms and Instructions located?

The grant application forms and their instructions can be downloaded from below listed web site addresses:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_forms.html

www.dol.gov/vets

D. Which Grant Provisions are in effect?

The grant award requirements, general grant provisions, HVRP SGA(s), VWIP SGA, and their respective PY 2007 Special Grant Provisions will remain in effect for the PY 2008 period of performance unless updated and provided to the grantees by the VETS National Office and/or Grant Officer.

The VETS National Office typically reviews the special grant provisions at least yearly to ensure updated programmatic and financial reporting requirements are kept up-to-date. If/when special grant provisions are updated and/or modified, the new special provisions are provided by the Grant Officer with the grant modification document. In addition, the special grant provisions are also explained at the National Competitive Grantees Training Conference which is held the first part of August every year.

Grant Modification Review Process

A. Who Reviews and Approves 2nd & 3rd Optional Year Grant Modifications?

The following U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service staffs are to review the 2nd & 3rd optional year grant modification application packages from their respective State(s) and Region(s).

- Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET)/Grant Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) reviews and makes recommendation for approval/disapproval;

- Regional Administrator for Veterans' Employment and Training (RAVET) reviews and makes recommendation for approval/disapproval;

- Regional Competitive Grants Expert Cluster Representative(s) reviews either simultaneously in cooperation with the RAVET/Regional Office Reviews (in order to curtail travel expenditures) and/or as part of a

CGEC on-site team in the National Office – reviews and makes recommendation for approval/disapproval;

- CGEC Lead and the Competitive Grants Lead reviews, makes recommendation for approval/disapproval, and generates the financial documentation for grant award approvals;

- Director of Operations and Programs reviews, makes recommendation for approval, and authorizes the financial obligations; and

- Assistance Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training and/or the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training reviews, makes final recommendations for approval, and authorizes the financial obligations; and

- Grant Officer reviews and approves all grant awards and modification requests, generates the grant award documents, and forwards financial obligation documents to DOL Finance. The Grant Officer maintains the "official" grant files.

B. What is Involved with the Grant Modification Request Review Process?

The grant modification request review process consists of analyzing the grant modification application package for completeness, accuracy, ensuring the financial data crosswalks on all forms accordingly, and if it was completed as required. The review process also includes analyzing grantee actual vs. planned technical performance and fiscal activity through the quarter ending March 31st, 2008.

1. DVETs/GOTRs must compare each grantee's pertinent final goals from last year to the proposed pertinent final goals for this year (see Attachment 6)

2. If proposed pertinent final goals are less than the previous year, then the DVET/GOTR is to notify the grantee.

3. The DVET/GOTR is authorized to negotiate with the grantee to ensure that the proposed pertinent final performance goals are at least equal to last year's approved pertinent final goals, unless there are special circumstances that prevent the grantee from performing. If so, the grantee is to provide an explanation and justification for each goal deviation.

4. DVETs/GOTRs are to conduct their annual on-site monitoring visits for each active HVRP and VWIP grant within their respective State, as travel funds permit. A courtesy copy of the on-site monitoring report is to be sent to each appropriate grantee, attached in VOPAR under the appropriate grant number and quarter, and a "hard copy" forwarded with each grant modification application request package.

In an effort to save limited travel funds for priority programmatic activities:

- all HVRP and VWIP grantees awarded at "high risk" during the PY 2007 performance period, an on-site evaluation is required;
- all HVRP and VWIP grantees currently on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), an on-site evaluation is highly recommended;
- All HVRP and VWIP grantees that have had a history of successfully achieving their programmatic and financial goals, an on-site evaluation is to be performed as travel funds permit but is not required at this time.

C. What are the various recommendations that can be made?

- **If the eligible grantee meets or exceeds all of their planned activities for the pertinent performance goals** (such as enrollments, entered employments, class room training, on-the-job training, cost per placement, and retention in employment for both 90 and 180 days) then the DVET/GOTR/RAVET may recommend 2nd or 3rd year funding.
- **If the eligible grantee experiences deviations of +/-10% to +/-15% from planned technical performance and/or financial goals**, the DVET/RAVET may consider recommending 2nd or 3rd year funding "at high risk". A high risk designation requires grantees to report technical and financial progress on a monthly basis and DVETs/GOTRs are to provide monthly technical assistance to the at high risk grantee via on-site, e-mail, or phone conversations.
- **For those eligible grantees that were on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and/or placed on "high risk",** the DVET/GOTR and their respective RAVET must indicate in their forwarding memorandum whether or not the approved CAP has had a positive effect on the grantee's ability to perform according to the original grant agreement. Further, if recommending 2nd or 3rd year funding of a previously designated "high risk" grantee that is now performing satisfactorily, that the grantee is expected to perform satisfactorily during the 2nd or 3rd year funding period (within +/-15% of planned goals).

- **If a "high risk" grantee has failed to show improvement** and we have provided (and documented) extensive technical assistance but to no avail, then the DVET/GOTR and their respective RAVET may recommend that 2nd or 3rd year funding not be awarded.

D. What if a Grantee Does Not Want to Apply for 2nd or 3rd Year Funding?

If an eligible HVRP grantee "voluntarily" does not apply for 2nd or 3rd year funding, then the DVET/GOTR is to secure an original signed "withdrawal" letter from the grantee and forward it to their respective RAVET who, in turn, will forward it to National Office to the attention of the Competitive Grants Lead.

IV. What are the Actions Required and Due Dates?

1. DVETs/GOTRs are to immediately ensure that eligible HVRP and VWIP grantees within their respective States are aware of the 2nd or 3rd year funding requirements as outlined in this Technical Assistance Guide (see Attachments 1 and 2 for lists of eligible applicants). Note: DVETs/ GOTRs are not authorized to deviate from the instructions and/or due dates contained in this directive. If special circumstances exist, DVETs/GOTRs are to inform their respective RAVETs, who in turn, will inform their respective CGEC member and Competitive Grants Lead.

2. Grantees must submit their 2nd or 3rd optional year grant modification requests to their respective DVET **by no later than close of business April 24th, 2008** (see web site address below in Section V. 1.).

3. DVETs will forward the "original" grant modification request package with his/her cover memo indicating their recommendation for approval/disapproval, completed grant review checklist (see Attachment 9) and completed comparison of goals spreadsheet (see Attachment 8) to the RAVET **by no later than May 8th, 2008.** DVETs will ensure any necessary corrections are made prior to submitting grant modification package to the RAVET.

4. RAVETs and their Regional CGEC Representatives will simultaneously review the 2nd & 3rd year grant modification packages (if practicable, and if not, an on-site CGEC review in National Office will have to be performed), make their recommendation for approval/disapproval in the RAVET transmittal memo addressed to Grant Officer Cassandra Mitchell through the Director of Operations and Programs, Gordon J. Burke, Jr. RAVETs will complete their section of the grant review checklist and ensure any

necessary corrections are made prior to submitting grant modification package to the National Office.

5. All completed original grant modification request packages are to be **mailed via federal express** to the attention of the Competitive Grants Lead, Room S-1312 **by no later than close of business May 16th, 2008.**

Note: Please do not use regular mail to send the grant modification applications to Washington D.C. as they are still radiating the incoming mail and it is usually received several weeks later and altered by the radiating process.

6. The Competitive Grants Lead will accept 2nd and 3rd year grant modification applications and grantee actual technical performance reports received late at the DVET and RAVET levels and make a determination of acceptance or rejection on a case by case basis.

7. The Competitive Grants Lead will accept any type of grant modification request (i.e., budget line item deviations, change in scope, etc.) up to **close of business May 20th, 2008.** Please note that grant modification requests received after close of business on May 20th, 2008, will not be accepted as we will not have enough time to process it prior to the end of the Program Year.

V. How do we know when the Grant Modification Request has been approved?

- The Grant Officer will generate a grant award document and send it directly to the grantee point of contact listed on the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance. The grant award document will indicate that the grant modification request has been approved and is effective the date of the Grant Officer's signature.

- In addition, the Grant Officer sends the Competitive Grants Lead a copy of all grant award documents, and in turn, scans the documents and sends them out electronically to their respective RAVETs and DVETs.

- For grantees recommended and approved for continued funding "at high risk", they will receive a letter from the VETS Director of Operations and Programs shortly after the grant awards are finalized by the Grant Officer (with copies sent to their respective DVETs/GOTRs and RAVETs). In the awarded "at high risk" letter, it will indicate that grantee technical programmatic and financial reporting will now be required on a monthly basis. Also, the DVET/GOTR will provide each grantee awarded "at high risk" technical assistance on a monthly basis in order to assist in ensuring

performance increases to the expected level(s).

VI. Where do we go for Technical Assistance?

1. Grantees are to contact their respective DVETs/GOTRs for technical assistance. A list of DVETs is located at website address:

- U.S. Department of Labor --Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) -- Staff Directory

2. DVETs/GOTRs are to contact their respective RAVET and/or their Regional CGEC Representatives.

3. Regional CGEC Representatives are to contact the CGEC Lead.

4. RAVETs and CGEC Lead are to contact the Competitive Grants Lead.

Attachments:

(1) HVRP Eligible Applicants for 2nd and 3rd Year Funding
(2) VWIP Eligible Applicants for 2nd Year Funding
(3) SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance
(4) SF 424A Budget Information
(5) Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-Applicants
(6) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement Form
(7) Recommended Format for Planned Common Measures Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Chart
(8) Certifications and Assurances
(9) Goals Comparison Spreadsheet
(10) DVET/RAVET Grant Review Checklist