

PART T--CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR VETERAN STUDENT SUCCESS

SEC. 873 MODEL PROGRAMS FOR CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR VETERAN STUDENT SUCCESS.

(a) Purpose.--It is the purpose of this section to encourage model programs to support veteran student success in postsecondary education by coordinating services to address the academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students.

(b) Grants Authorized.--

(1) In general.--Subject to the availability of appropriations under subsection (f), the Secretary shall award grants to institutions of higher education to develop model programs to support veteran student success in postsecondary education.

(2) Grant period.--A grant awarded under this section shall be awarded for a period of three years.

(c) Use of Grants.--

(1) Required activities.--An institution of higher education receiving a grant under this section shall use such grant to carry out a model program that includes--

(A) establishing a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success on the campus of the institution to provide a single point of contact to coordinate comprehensive support services for veteran students;

(B) establishing a veteran student support team, including representatives from the offices of the institution responsible for admissions, registration, financial aid, veterans benefits, academic advising, student health, personal or mental health counseling, career advising, disabilities services, and any other office of the institution that provides support to veteran students on campus;

(C) providing a coordinator whose primary responsibility is to coordinate the model program carried out under this section;

(D) monitoring the rates of veteran student enrollment, persistence, and completion; and

(E) developing a plan to sustain the Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success after the grant period.

(2) Other authorized activities.--An institution of higher education receiving a grant under this section may use such grant to carry out any of the following activities with respect to veteran students:

(A) Outreach and recruitment of such students.

(B) Supportive instructional services for such students, which may include--

(i) personal, academic, and career counseling, as an ongoing part of the program;

(ii) tutoring and academic skill-building instruction assistance, as needed; and

(iii) assistance with special admissions and transfer of credit from previous postsecondary education or experience.

(C) Assistance in obtaining student financial aid.

(D) Housing support for veteran students living in institutional facilities and commuting veteran students.

(E) Cultural events, academic programs, orientation programs, and other activities designed to ease the transition to campus life for veteran students.

(F) Support for veteran student organizations and veteran student support groups on campus.

(G) Coordination of academic advising and admissions counseling with military bases and national guard units in the area.

(H) Other support services the institution determines to be necessary to ensure the success of veterans in achieving educational and career goals.

(d) Application; Selection.--

(1) Application.--To be considered for a grant under this section, an institution of higher education shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(2) Selection considerations.--In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall consider--

(A) the number of veteran students enrolled at an institution of higher education; and

(B) the need for model programs to address the needs of veteran students at a wide range of institutions of higher education, including the need to provide--

(i) an equitable distribution of such grants to institutions of higher education of various types and sizes;

(ii) an equitable geographic distribution of such grants; and

(iii) an equitable distribution of such grants among rural and urban areas.

(e) Evaluation and Accountability Plan.--The Secretary shall develop an evaluation and accountability plan for model programs funded under this section to objectively measure the impact of such programs, including a measure of whether postsecondary education enrollment, persistence, and completion for veterans increases as a result of such programs.

(f) Authorization of Appropriations.--There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.