



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Veteran Initiatives Designation Grant

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

AND

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

FINAL PROPOSALS DUE

April 3, 2026

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General Information & Overview

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Veteran Initiatives Designation Grant is part of the Governor's ongoing investment in military-affiliated student education. The Veteran Initiatives Designation Grant will provide funding to resource campuses that want to prioritize support to military-affiliated students and earn designation as a Veteran Education Transition Support (VETS) Campus in Tennessee.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-1302 emphasizes the importance of statewide support for veterans transitioning from military service to postsecondary education. This section outlines strategies such as encouraging veteran enrollment and addressing barriers that may deter participation in higher education. These barriers include affordability, lack of awareness among faculty and staff of military and veteran culture, the need for orientation and mentoring programs tailored to veterans, and facilitating credential completion as quickly as possible.

This Request for Proposal (RFP), issued by THEC, is a part of a \$1 million competitive grant process. Grants of up to \$150,000 will be available to eligible institutions for a period of up to twenty-four (24) months to support campuses that are seeking designation as a VETS Campus. Proposals must include strategies focused on creating or expanding services that support military-affiliated students. Additionally, each strategy must align with a requirement outlined in the VETS designation application (see appendix A).

Eligible Postsecondary Institutions

Any Tennessee public or private, not-for-profit postsecondary institution not currently designated as a VETS or VETS Bravo campus may apply for the grant. Eligible institutions will execute a grant contract with THEC and will be responsible for coordinating all grant activities and managing the contract. Contract management includes monitoring, auditing, and reporting to THEC according to the established timelines.

Proposals must include a detailed plan to become a designated VETS Campus during the award period. The criteria for designation are outlined in Appendix A. In addition to the mandatory requirement to submit the VETS Campus application, proposals must allocate resources to assist military-affiliated students in successfully enrolling in a postsecondary institution and obtaining a credential. A successful proposal should align with the criteria to become a VETS Campus (see Appendix A) and may include one (1) or more of the following strategies:

- Establishing veterans' centers or lounges on campus to provide study space, social interaction, enhanced academic support, and other resources;
- Providing training programs for faculty and staff to increase awareness of veteran-specific issues;
- Developing standardized systems to track the enrollment, retention, and graduation of military-affiliated students;
- Forming veteran success committees composed of staff, faculty, and students to advance best practices in veteran education;
- Providing dedicated student veteran coordinators on each campus to serve as a single point of contact for military-affiliated students; and
- Expanding internship and employment opportunities for military-affiliated students through annual career development sessions and partnerships with employers.

Proposal Specifications

Applications must address the following criteria and present a detailed plan for achieving the outlined objectives.

Section 1: Program Narrative (5 Points)

Provide a brief overview of the proposed project.

Essential Component:

- ***Brief narrative of the proposed project.*** Provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed project, including a summary of necessary resources and the strategies for deployment.

Section 2: Demonstration of need (25 Points)

Proposals must describe the project, any contracted services, and how the proposed strategies will address demonstrated needs for military-affiliated students.

Essential Components:

- ***Demonstrating the need for action.*** Using institutional data and/or relevant sources to identify current resource gaps and explain how addressing these gaps will benefit military-affiliated students. The proposal should focus on anticipated future needs that support the VETS Campus designation.

- **Clear linkages between grant activities and student needs.** Successful proposals must identify and highlight any unmet needs or deficits currently faced by military-affiliated students and explain how the proposed program will address each one.

Section 3: Program Plan (25 Points)

Based on the needs identified in Section 2, the proposal must include a detailed timeline, objectives, and accountability plan.

Essential Components:

- **Detailed summary of proposed program.** Provide a detailed summary of the proposed project to include how grant activities align with research or data, how the proposed project will increase student success.
- **Detailed project timeline and overview.** Provide a quarterly overview of the critical activities and actions for project development and implementation.
- **Identify key objectives for each phase of the project and describe how they will be measured.** Identify objectives for each phase and describe how they will be measured. Include metrics for tracking progress and outcomes.
- **Project governance and accountability plan.** Clearly outline grant management, meeting schedules, decision-making structure, and identify a project director who will maintain oversight throughout the project period.

Section 4: Sustainability (15 Points)

Proposals must include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining activities beyond the 24-month grant period. Securing another grant is not an acceptable sustainability plan. *If the proposal includes contracted services*, a detailed plan including the availability of long-term resources for maintenance or updates needs to be included.

Essential components:

- **Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the 24-month funding period.** Describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period and outline the roles thereafter. *If the proposal*

includes contracted services, provide a detailed description of the availability of long-term resources to support student success.

Section 5: Budget Plan (15 Points)

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan and a completed budget using the template provided in Appendix C. Applicable “Grant Budget Line-Item Details” should be submitted **as a separate attachment with the completed budget.**

Successful proposals will provide clear alignment between the funding requested and grant activities. All proposals must include a detailed financial plan and completed budget using the template provided. If services are contracted, the services must be included and an explanation of how contracted services will specifically address student needs.

Services purchased should provide students with resources that support student success, retention, and completion. If the proposal seeks indirect costs, an explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant must be provided. Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget and dependent upon approval by THEC.

Subawards are not permitted for these grant funds.

Essential Components:

- ***Clear alignment between funding requests and grant activities.*** Detailed description of how each line item in the budget supports the goals and projected outcomes of the grant.
 - ***Role of proposed services request.*** Required only for proposals seeking contracted services with grant funds. Explain how services will specifically address military-affiliated students’ needs from Section 2.
 - ***Explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant.*** Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget.

Section 6: Optional Criteria (Up to Fifteen Additional Points)

Proposals may receive up to fifteen (15) additional points by incorporating a partnership (higher education, industry, local agency, or government agency, etc.)

within the strategy. This partnership must extend beyond mere contracted services, demonstrating a commitment to fostering ongoing relationships between the entities involved. The goal is to enhance services for military-affiliated students.

While contracted services may be a part of the partnership, the plan should reflect a more comprehensive and sustainable collaboration. **The maximum points available under this section for any one proposal are capped at 15 points.**

Essential Components:

- **Detailed description of each partner's role and their capabilities in implementing the identified program.** Describe each partner's role and capabilities, including assigned tasks and personnel.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership agreement.** Applicants must submit a signed MOU with partner outlining the benefits, roles, and responsibilities of the relationship. Letters of support will not be accepted as a substitute for this MOU.

At a minimum, a MOU included as part of this grant should establish an agreement among the partners that outline each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities. MOUs **must** be signed by **all** partners to earn points in the scoring rubric.

Submission Guidelines & Timeline

The application process consists of two steps: the submission of the Notice of Intent to Submit and the submission of the final proposal.

A Notice of Intent to Submit must be transmitted via Formstack no later than **12:00 p.m. (Central Time) Friday, February 27, 2026**. The Notice of Intent to Submit must include the following:

- Name of Higher Education Institution(s)/Fiscal Agent
- Project Director/Co-Director
- Project Director/Co-Director Phone Number(s)
- Project Director/Co-Director Email Address(es)
- Title of Proposed Project
- Proposed Partners (All additional Mandatory Partners and Anticipated Workforce Partners)
- Proposed Funding Requested

The submission of the Notice of Intent to Submit is mandatory. If you do not submit a Notice of Intent by the deadline below you may not submit a proposal. Final proposals must be received electronically through Formstack by **12:00 p.m. (Central Time) according to the schedule below.**

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Link to Notice of Intent:

https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/veteran_initiatives_grant_notice_of_intent

RFP TIMELINE:

- Release Date: Monday, January 26, 2026.
- Technical Assistance Webinar: Tuesday, February 17, 2026
- Notice of Intent due: Friday, February 27, 2026
- Final proposal due: Friday, April 3, 2026
- Tentative Notification of Selection: June 2026
- Tentative Technical Assistance Webinar for Grantees: June 2026
- Tentative Contract Start Date: July 2026
- Tentative Contract End Date: July 2028

Grant Application Procedures

All grant applications will be submitted via Formstack. After submitting the Notice of Intent, potential applicants will receive instructions for uploading documents through Formstack. Applicants will be able to upload all proposals and verify that their proposals were submitted on time through this process.

The application must include:

- Cover Sheet (see Appendix B)
- Table of Contents
- One-page Abstract/Project Summary
- Program Proposal: This section should be double-spaced, in twelve-point font, with one- inch margin.
- *Note: Maximum document length is **fifteen pages**, excluding the cover sheet, data list, and abstract, table of contents, budget, and appendices.*
- Budget with applicable line-item details (Appendix C)

Notification

Once each proposal has been received, a confirmation notice will be generated by Formstack and received by the project director. **If you do not receive your confirmation notice within one hour of submitting your proposal, please call Katie Staple at (615) 812-1288 or email the THEC Veteran Initiatives Team at Veteran.Initiatives@tn.gov.** *It is the sole responsibility of the proposed project director to verify receipt of the proposal and notify project partners.*

One week after the proposal deadline, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission will post all received proposals on the THEC website, accessible at www.tn.gov/thec. **If you have submitted a proposal but it is not listed, contact the THEC Veteran Initiatives Team at Veteran.Initiatives@tn.gov immediately.**

Review and Award Process

The Veteran Initiatives Designation Grant proposals will be submitted to THEC and reviewed by a selection committee. Selection committee members will score proposals utilizing a standardized rubric included in Appendix D of the grant RFP. The rubric ensures that all proposals are evaluated objectively and that selected proposals align with the state's goals for military-affiliated education. Final scoring by the committee members will solely determine which proposals are approved for funding.

Legal Information

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that federally assisted programs be free of discrimination. Should you feel you have been discriminated against, contact your local Title VI representatives. The Title VI Coordinator at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is Amber Walsh (615) 532-3500.

Funding

Funder reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to reject any of the proposals responding to the RFP, and to re-issue the RFP and accept new proposals if the selection committee determines that doing so is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee. In addition, the funder may consider geographic parity in awarding.

All costs incurred in preparation of a proposal shall be borne by the applicant. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable from grant funds. THEC reserves the right to withhold funding if at any point the program is not adhering to federal

or state requirements or to the objectives and goals declared in this RFP. THEC staff reserve the right to attend any project activity or meeting to ensure the fidelity of this program, and to conduct regular monitoring of the project.

APPENDIX A: VETS Campus Designation Criteria

- **Conduct an annual campus survey of students who are veterans to identify the views, needs, issues and suggestions of veterans.** Develop a survey that can identify student needs annually. The method used to study students can be in the form of a survey, town hall, focus group or interviews as long as the method and demographics are accurately recorded with the results. Results should include how many people were in attendance, how many people actively participated, date, time, location and host name of the event.
- **Provide information to faculty and staff about military and veterans' culture, including combat-related mental or physical disabilities or other challenges.** Institutions can conduct their own sessions, partner with other campuses or request THEC to provide necessary training as well as convenings.
- **Administer orientation programs for students who are veterans.** If a student veteran-specific orientation cannot be accommodated, information for student veterans should be roped into other transfer and new student orientations that include veteran education benefit information and community resources available.
- **Facilitate mentoring and support programs for students who are veterans.** Examples of mentoring and support programs include peer mentoring, programs, veteran resource centers, veteran advisors or career counselors.
- **Develop outreach and communication strategies for military bases located near the campus, for the purpose of assessing veterans' educational goals and meeting their identified needs.** Develop outreach via flyers, handouts, presentations to the local community and the veterans around campus.
- **Create and maintain a process for the assessment of prior learning that grants academic credit to veterans for transferable training and experience attaining through military service.** Work with THEC's prior learning assessment (PLA) initiatives to increase transferability to college.
- **Provide, on the campus website, information on the availability of prior learning assessments and potential program credit for skills, training or education obtained during military service.** Submit standardized PLAs annually to THEC to be added to the Servicemembers Opportunity Portal (<https://tn-sop.tn.gov/>)

APPENDIX B: Cover Sheet

NAME OF LEAD ENTITY

Veteran Initiatives Designation Grant [Program Title]
[Lead Entity Name] [Fiscal Agent] IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

1. [Higher Education Institution(s)]

[Project Director Name, Mailing Address]

[Director's Telephone]

[Director's E-mail Address]

Funding requested:

[\$Dollar Amount]

X

President of Higher Education Institution
(Fiscal Agent)

X

Project Director (Lead Entity)

APPENDIX C: Budget

GRANT BUDGET				
Veteran Initiatives Designation Grant				
The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expense incurred during the following				
Applicable				
Period:		BEGIN:	END:	
POLICY 03 Object Line-item Reference	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY ¹	GRANT CONTRACT	GRANTEE PARTICIPATION	TOTAL PROJECT
1. 2	Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00
4, 15	Professional Fee, Grant & Award ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00
11. 12	Travel, Conferences & Meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	Interest ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
14	Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Specific Assistance To Individuals	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	Depreciation ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	Other Non-Personnel ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	Capital Purchase ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
22	Indirect Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	In-Kind Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
25	GRAND TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Each expense object line-item shall be defined by the Department of Finance and Administration Policy 03, *Uniform Reporting Requirements and Cost Allocation Plans for Subrecipients of Federal and State Grant Monies, Appendix A.* (posted on the Internet at: <https://www.tn.gov/finance/looking-for/policies.html>).

² Applicable detail follows this page if line-item is funded.

GRANT BUDGET LINE - ITEM DETAIL

Line 1 Salaries and Wages

On this line, enter compensation, fees, salaries, and wages paid to officers, directors, trustees, and full-time employees. An attached schedule may be required showing client wages or other included in the aggregations.

Line 2 Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Enter (a) the institution's contributions to pension plans and to employee benefit programs such as health, life, and disability insurance; and (b) the institution's portion of payroll taxes such as social security and Medicare taxes and unemployment and workers' compensation insurance. An attached schedule may be required showing client benefits and taxes or other included in the aggregations.

Line 4 Professional Fees

Enter the organization's fees to outside professionals, consultants, and personal-service contractors. (A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)

Line 5 Supplies

Enter the organization's expenses for office supplies, food and beverages, and other supplies. An attached schedule may be required showing food expenses or other details included in the aggregations.

Line 6 Telephone

Enter the institution's expenses for telephone, cellular phones, FAX, E-mail, telephone equipment maintenance, and other related expenses.

Line 7 Postage and Shipping

Enter the institution's expenses for postage, messenger services, overnight delivery, outside mailing service fees, freight and trucking, and maintenance of delivery and shipping vehicles.

Line 9 Equipment Rental and Maintenance

Enter the institution's expenses for renting and maintaining computers, copiers, postage meters, and other office equipment used exclusively for this grant initiative.

Line 10 Printing and Publications

Enter the institution's expenses for producing printed materials (not including posters, advertising, and other marketing materials), purchasing books and publications, and buying subscriptions to publications.

Line 11 Travel

Enter the institution's expenses for travel, including transportation, meals, lodging, and per diem payments.

Line 12 Conferences and Meetings

Enter the institution's expenses for conducting or attending meetings, conferences, and conventions. Include rental of facilities, speakers' fees and expenses, printed materials, and registration fees.

Line 15 Grants and Awards

Enter the institution's awards, grants, subsidies, and other pass-through expenditures to individuals and to other institutions, including travel and equipment allowances outside the institution (this includes WBL salary reimbursements). This classification includes items used in direct support of this initiative. (A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)

Line 18 Other Non-personnel Expenses

Enter the institution's allowable expenses for advertising, the institution's and employees' membership dues in associations and professional societies and licenses, permits, registrations, and testing fees.

Line 19 Capital Purchases

Enter the organization's purchases of fixed assets and purchases with a minimum life expectancy of one year. Include land, equipment, buildings, leasehold improvements, and other fixed assets.

Line 22 Indirect Costs

This amount is intended to cover costs associated with administrative functions including providing the required project reports, financial information, and information to support project evaluation. Not to exceed eight percent of the total budget.

Line 24 In-Kind Expenses

This amount is for reporting the value of contributed resources applied to the program. Approval and reporting guidelines for in-kind contributions will be specified by those contracting state agencies who allow their use toward earning grant funds.

Line 25 Total Expenses

Total Direct and Administrative Expenses, and Line 24, In-kind Expenses, goes on this line.

APPENDIX D: Scoring Rubric

Evaluation Guidelines

For each section, rubrics will be reviewed to determine which criteria have been addressed in the proposal and points will be assigned accordingly. For criteria with ranges, reviewers will select the statement that most closely aligns with the information provided in the proposal and award a score in the stated range. Criteria with set points are awarded on whether they are addressed in the proposal or not.

Each **essential component** of the proposal will be reviewed to determine which criteria have been addressed and points will be assigned accordingly. For **evaluation criteria** with ranges, reviewers will select the statement that most closely aligns with the information provided in the proposal and award a score within the stated range. For **evaluation criteria** with set points, reviewers will award points for evaluation criteria that are clearly addressed in the proposal.

Section 1: Program Narrative (5 points)

Successful proposals will provide a clear and concise program narrative of the proposed project.

Essential Component: *Brief narrative of the proposed project.* Provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed project, including a summary of necessary resources and the strategies for deployment. (5 Points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not provide a clear and concise program narrative of the proposed project, including a summary of necessary resources and the strategies for deployment. (0 points)
- Proposal is missing one or more of the following components: provides a clear and concise program narrative of the proposed project or a summary of necessary resources and the strategies for deployment. (1-3 points)
- Proposal provides a clear and concise overview of the program narrative of the proposed project, including a summary of necessary resources and the strategies for deployment. (4-5 points)

Section 2: Demonstration of Need (25 points)

Successful proposals must outline the proposed project; any contracted services; and how the proposed initiatives will address the needs demonstrated for military-affiliated students served by the proposal.

Essential Component: *Demonstration of need for action.* Using institutional data and/or relevant sources to identify current resource gaps and explain how addressing these gaps will benefit military-affiliated students. The proposal should focus on anticipated future needs that support the VETS Campus designation. (15 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not provide a demonstrated need to justify grant activities. (0 points)
- Proposal provides a demonstrated need to justify grant activities from at least **one** source. (1-4 points)
- Proposal provides a demonstrated need to justify grant activities from at least **two** sources. (5-9 points)
- Proposal provides a demonstrated need to justify grant activities from **three or more** sources. (10-15 points)

Essential Component: *Clear linkages between grant activities and student needs.* Successful proposals must identify and highlight any unmet needs or deficits currently faced by military-affiliated students and explain how the proposed program will address each one. (10 Points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not identify or highlight any unmet need or deficient currently faced by military-affiliated students. (0 points)
- Proposal identifies or highlights at least **one** unmet need or deficit currently faced by military-affiliated students. (1-4 points)
- Proposal identifies or highlights **two or more** unmet needs or deficits currently faced by military-affiliated students. (5-10 points)

Section 3: Program Plan (25 Points)

Successful proposals will include a detailed timeline, objectives and accountability based on needs identified in Section 2.

Essential Component: *Detailed summary of proposed program.* Provide a detailed summary of the proposed project to include how grant activities align with research or data, and how the proposed project will increase student success. (10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not align with research or data identified in Section 2. (0 points)
- Proposal somewhat aligns with research or data identified in Section 2 and grant activities will increase student success. (1-5 points)
- Proposal clearly aligns with research or data identified in Section 2 and grant activities will increase student success. (6-10 points)

Essential Component: *Detailed project timeline and overview.* Provide a quarterly overview of the critical activities and actions for project development and implementation (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not include a project timeline or an overview of the planned activities. (0 points)
- Proposal includes a project timeline and an overview of the planned activities but lacks detail. (1-3 points)
- Proposal includes a detailed project timeline with a quarterly overview of activities, critical meetings, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the project. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Identify key objectives for each phase of the project and describe how they will be measured.* Identify objectives for each phase and describe how they will be measured. Include metrics for tracking progress and outcomes. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not identify key objectives for each phase of the project or how they will be measured including metrics progress and outcomes. (0 points)
- Proposal somewhat identifies key objectives for each phase of the project and/or how they will be measured including metrics progress and outcomes. (1-3 points)
- Proposal clearly identifies key objectives for each phase of the project and how they will be measured including metrics progress and outcomes. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Project governance and accountability plan*. Clearly detail the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director who will maintain oversight throughout the project period. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- A project plan is not presented. (0 points)
- A project plan is presented but lacks sufficient details for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure. (1-3 points)
- A project plan is presented and includes sufficient details for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure. (4-5 points)

Section 4: Sustainability (15 Points)

Successful proposal must include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining activities beyond the 24-month grant period. Securing another grant is not an acceptable sustainability plan. *If the proposal includes contracted services*, a detailed plan including the availability of long-term resources for maintenance or updates needs to be included.

Essential Component: *Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the 24-month funding period*. Describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period and outline the roles thereafter. *If the proposal includes contracted services*, provide a detailed description of the availability of long-term resources to support student success. (15 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not include a sustainability plan, **or** the proposed sustainability plan involves securing other grant funding. (0 points)
- Sustainability plan is incomplete and/or impractical, given the scope of the project. (1-4 points)
- Proposal includes a plan for sustaining the program beyond the grant period that outlines the roles, responsibilities as well as any contracted services, but lacks sufficient detail. (5-9 points)
- Proposal includes a detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the grant period that outlines the roles, responsibilities as well as any contracted services. (10-15 points)

Section 5: Budget Plan (15 Points)

Successful proposals will include a detailed financial plan and a complete budget using the template provided in Appendix C. Applicable “Grant Budget Line-Item Details” should be submitted **as a separate attachment with the completed budget** (see Appendix C). All proposals must include a detailed financial plan and completed budget using the template provided. If services are contracted, the services must be included and an explanation of how contracted services will specifically address student needs.

Services purchased should provide students with resources that support student success, retention, and completion. If the proposal seeks indirect costs, an explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant must be provided. Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget and dependent upon approval by THEC.

Subawards are not permitted for these grant funds.

Essential Component: *Clear alignment between funding requests and grant activities*

Detailed description of how each line item in the budget supports the goals and projected outcomes of the grant. (15 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Budget is not included. (0 points)
- Budget is incomplete and/or impractical, given the scope of the proposal. If required, the proposal does not include a description of any contracted services and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost. (1-5 points)
- Budget lacks sufficient detail, but expenditures are practical given the scope of the proposal. If required, the proposal provides a description of any contracted services and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost but does not provide sufficient detail. (6-10 points)
- Budget is complete and accurately reflects, with sufficient justification and detail listed for each line item. If required, the proposal provides any contracted services and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost. (11-15 points)

Section 6: Optional Criteria (Up to Fifteen Additional Points)

Proposals may receive up to fifteen (15) additional points by incorporating a partnership (higher education, industry, local agency, or government agency, etc.) within the strategy. This partnership must extend beyond mere contracted services, demonstrating a commitment to fostering ongoing relationships between the entities involved. The goal is to enhance services for military-affiliated students. While contracted services may be a part of the partnership, the plan should reflect a more comprehensive and sustainable collaboration. **The maximum points available under this section for any one proposal are capped at 15 points.**

Essential Component: *Detailed description of each partner's role and their capabilities in implementing the identified program.* Describe how each partner will carry out the grant project; provide a description of assigned tasks; and identify specific personnel and the roles they will play throughout the project. (10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not include a partnership within the strategy (0 points)
- Proposal includes a partnership with the strategy but lacks detail related to how each partner will carry out grant activities, roles, or assigned tasks throughout the project. (1-5 points)

- Proposal includes a partnership with the strategy and contains a detailed description of how each partner will carry out grant activities, roles, and assigned tasks throughout the project. (6-10 points)

Essential Component: *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership agreement*. Applicants must also submit a signed MOU with partner outlining the benefits of the relationship. At a minimum, a MOU needs to outline each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities. MOUs **must** be signed by **all** partners to earn points. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- Proposal does not include a signed MOU outlining each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities in the partnership agreement. (0 points)
- Proposal does include a signed MOU outlining each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities in the partnership agreement. (5 points)