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TO: Chancellors, Presidents, and Directors of Tennessee
Institutions of Higher Education

FROM: Mike Krause, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education
Commission 

SUBJECT: Veteran Reconnect Grant Request for Proposals: Prior Learning
Assessment

DATE: June 15, 2018

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is pleased to announce the fourth round of Request for Proposals (RFP) for Veteran Reconnect Grants. This initiative is a component of the Drive to 55, Governor Haslam's goal of equipping 55 percent of working age Tennesseans with a degree or certificate by 2025.

Since the first round of awards in 2015, Veteran Reconnect Grants have funded campus services for student veterans and provided veteran-specific resources, such as the development of prior learning assessment processes and policies, expansion of veteran centers, and professional development for faculty and staff on the specific needs of students with military experience.

This fourth round will provide several funding options to support institutional efforts to further faculty engagement in serving student veterans. As nontraditional students, veteran students primarily engage with their institution via faculty interactions in and out of the classroom.¹ As a key component of the veteran student collegiate experience, THEC seeks a multifaceted approach to engage faculty. This includes the continued support of prior learning assessment and the creation of academic pathways that move veteran students from military service to employment.

Veteran Reconnect Found 4 will fund efforts to improve processes and policies for the evaluation of military training for academic credit for the benefit of student veterans through Process and Sustainability initiatives, and will also support the

¹ Wyatt, L. G. (2011). Nontraditional student engagement: Increasing adult student success and retention. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 59(1), 10-20.

creation of new academic pathways. There are an estimated 83,000 veterans in Tennessee with some college credits, but no degree.² For these veterans attempting to transition to higher education, the ability to obtain credit for their military experience can be a driver of institutional choice and a reason to return to college.

Process Initiative: For institutions that did not receive funding from the third round of the Veteran Reconnect Grant (2017-2019), the Process Initiative will fund efforts that will: (1) embed new evaluation processes for translating military training to academic credit; (2) create or amend policies that clarify and support the alignment of academic credit to military training; (3) improve communication strategies to ensure this information is available to veterans before they enroll; and, (4) identify and support the personnel required for success in these efforts.

Sustainability Initiative: For institutions that did receive funding from the third round of the Veteran Reconnect Grant (2017-2019), the Sustainability Initiative will fund efforts that will: (1) sustain and improve current evaluation processes for translating military training to academic credit; (2) sustain and improve communication strategies to ensure this information is available to veterans before they enroll; (3) develop and implement plans to promote military prior learning assessment throughout the institution; and, (4) identify and support the personnel required for success in these efforts.

Military Pathway Pilot Projects: More information will be available later this summer.

THEC will provide grants up to \$80,000 per institution for the Process Initiative for a period of 18 months for 8 to 10 institutions. THEC will provide grants up to \$25,000 per institution for the Sustainability Initiative for a period of 15 months for 3 to 4 institutions. THEC will also provide technical assistance and training to grantees. Successful grantees will demonstrate need for improving services to student veterans and provide plans to meet that need.

Please be aware of a few important dates:

- THEC will host an informational webinar for both Veteran Reconnect initiatives. At least one representative from each institution applying for the grant should plan to attend the appropriate webinar in order to qualify for the maximum points on the scoring rubric (as described on page 5 of the RFP). Recordings of the webinars will also be available.
 - Process Initiative: **Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 10:00am (CDT)**
Webinar Link:
<https://tngov.webex.com/tngov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e535566913731274c7b39dd56449a7bc5>
 - Sustainability Initiative: **Friday, June 22, 2018 at 10:00am (CDT)**
Webinar Link:
<https://tngov.webex.com/tngov/onstage/g.php?MTID=eb716de6ba500d8d9d43892ed0d98a2b0>
- Letters of Intent are due on **Friday, June 29, 2018 at 4:30pm (CDT)**

² American Community Survey (2010-2014) 5 year estimates. Public Use Microdata.

- Full proposals are due on **Friday, July 13, 2018 by 4:30pm (CDT)**. Please see the RFP for key dates regarding the application, review process, and the format for proposals.

THEC looks forward to receiving your submissions.



VETERAN
Reconnect

2018-2019

Veteran Reconnect
Grants

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA):
Process Initiative

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
and
GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

NOTICE OF INTENT DUE
June 29, 2018
FINAL PROPOSALS DUE
July 13, 2018

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Request for Proposals

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I. General Information

A. Purpose Statement

There are an estimated 83,000 veterans in Tennessee with some college credit, but no degree.¹ For these veterans attempting to transition to higher education, the ability to obtain credit for their military experience can be a driver of institutional choice and a reason in and of itself to return to college.² However, there are Tennessee institutions that do not evaluate students' military credit prior to enrollment, so veterans and service members must decide upon a school and, many times, a program of study before they know how their military training will be applied to academic course work in their chosen program of study.³

B. Veteran Reconnect

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is issuing a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) to fund initiatives that will: (1) embed new evaluation processes for translating military training to academic credit; (2) create or amend policies that clarify and support the alignment of academic credit to military training; (3) improve communication strategies to ensure this information is available to veterans before they enroll; and, (4) identify and support the personnel required for success in these efforts.

This grant builds on efforts initiated by the Tennessee General Assembly, demonstrating that veterans are a policy priority in Tennessee. Grant efforts will capitalize on the successes of previous collaborations between THEC and the Tennessee Board of Regents, locally Governed Institutions, and the University of Tennessee system to support prior learning assessment. The grant will also build on the actions of postsecondary institutions that currently demonstrate their commitment to veterans by executing programs to support veterans' success.

For the purposes of this grant, applicants may use funding to create a consistent prior learning assessment evaluation process, improve efforts to communicate the availability of credit for military experience, and allow veterans and service members to view accurate

¹ American Community Survey (2010-2014) 5 yr. estimates. Public Use Microdata.

² Steele J.L., Salcedo, N., & Coley, J. (2010) Military veterans' experiences using the Post- 9/11 GI Bill and pursuing postsecondary education. Rand Corporation.
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1083.pdf

See also: Rust, D. Z., & Ikard, W. L. (2016). Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Completion: Improved Outcomes at a Public Institution. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 64(2), 94.
doi:10.1080/07377363.2016.1177871

³ THEC (2016) Institutional Practices for Awarding Academic Credit for Military Experience. Limited distribution.
See: <https://tinyurl.com/THEC-pla-survey>

estimates of the amount of credit they will receive for their military experience prior to enrolling at a Higher Education institution.

C. Technical Assistance

THEC will provide technical assistance to grantees in the form of centralized training, individualized consultation, and other coordinated efforts to share best practices. THEC will utilize outside experts to deliver training on enhancing methods for evaluating military experience for academic credit, as well as methods of communicating the availability of academic credit for military experience to veterans. THEC will also provide customizable marketing materials and internal communications guidance to institutions to assist in providing their student veterans with information about opportunities for credit from military experience.

D. Grant Award Amounts and Eligibility

The 2018-19 Veteran Reconnect program will provide grants of up to \$80,000 per institution in addition to technical assistance provided by THEC. Grants will be awarded for a grant period beginning October 2018 and ending March 2020. Examples of uses of funds include: support for marketing; outreach; stipends for existing faculty and staff; hiring new staff in accordance with guidelines (see appendix D); costs for hosting meetings on campus; and travel for up to two meetings hosted by THEC. Successful grantees will use proposals to connect identified need (informed by a self-evaluation included in Appendix) and grant criteria to funding opportunities. An eligible institution of higher education includes any public or private, non-profit institution principally domiciled in Tennessee.

Veteran Reconnect Grant recipients from either of the first two rounds are eligible to submit proposals for this grant. Round three Veteran Reconnect Grant recipients are not eligible to submit proposals for this Process Update Initiative grant.

II. Grant Criteria

Grantees will complete the following as part of the grant:

1. Grantees will develop and implement strategies for improving prior learning assessment practices for the purpose of better serving student veterans, throughout the grant period. These strategies will be based on identified needs.
2. Grantees will hire new or expand current personnel in order to support institutional efforts to make prior learning assessment available to student veterans
3. Grantees will identify faculty, staff, and administrators to be trained in assessing the prior learning and military experience of student veterans for academic credit.

4. Grantees will participate in THEC-hosted training on evaluating military experience for the purpose of awarding academic credit and communicating credit for prior learning to students.
5. Grantees will develop and implement an internal engagement plan to involve faculty members in the prior learning assessment process.
6. Grantees will develop strategies for communicating the availability of articulated academic credit for military experience and implementing those strategies within the grant period.
7. Grantees will plan and host internal meetings with campus stakeholders to discuss prior learning assessment for student veterans.
8. Grantees will formalize implemented processes through methods such as websites, policies, and/or catalogs ensuring sustainment of program.

III. Application Requirements

A. Proposal Components

Applicants should submit the following items as part of the application:

- Cover Sheet (Appendix F)
Applicants must complete the cover page and include all required signatures. Applicants must designate a project manager and a primary contact (these can be the same individual) to report to THEC. Applicants should identify the contact(s) by listing first and last name, title and contact information on the cover page.
- Project Abstract
Applicants should include a project abstract no longer than half a page. This will be used to describe funded proposals in publications and on THEC's website.
- Proposal (all components as defined on pp. 5-7)
- Budget (Appendix C)
- Prior Learning Assessment for Student Veterans self-evaluation (Appendix G)

B. Letter of Intent

A letter of intent to submit proposals for this grant is due through e-mail by **4:30 PM (CDT) on June 29, 2018**. The format of the letter of intent is included in Appendix E of this document.

The *Notice of Intent to Submit* must include the following information:

- Name of Higher Education Institution
- Project Manager / Point of Contact

C. Proposal Submission and Timeline

Final proposals, including all components described in this RFP, must be received by email to **ken.hanson@tn.gov** no later than **4:30 PM (CDT) on July 13, 2018**.

Date	Activity
6.15.2018	Release of Request for Proposals
6.20.2018	Webinar for interested applicants Note: at least one representative from the applying institution should plan to attend this webinar in order to receive full points on the grant scoring rubric. Registration is available at https://tngov.webex.com/tngov/onstage/g.php?MTID=e535566913731274c7b39dd56449a7bc5
6.29.2018	<i>Notice of Intent to Submit Due</i>
7.13.2018	Proposals Due
8.3.2018	Award Announcement
August - September 2018	Contract Processing & Institutional Hiring Process (as needed)
10.1.2018	Projects Commence & Personnel Hiring Complete

IV. Proposal Format and scoring

Each section may be awarded up to four points, and each section is weighted for a total of 100 available points. The question weights are connected with each section. Potential grantees also receive four points (six percent of the overall score) for attending a webinar scheduled for June 20 (Registration is available by following [this link](#))

Section 1: Introduction – Four Percent of Overall Score

Under the subheading “introduction”, describe the student veteran population on your campus and the veteran population within your campus’ region. Include county census data regarding enrollment of veteran students using Post-9/11 GI benefits and the total number of veteran students using Post-9/11 GI benefits at your institution. Limit your response in this section to 250 words.

Section 2: Identifying Need -18 Percent of Overall Score

Complete the attached self-evaluation of current efforts (found in Appendix G) that affect the prior learning assessment of student veterans on your campus. Paste the final narrative of this evaluation in to this section of your proposal and append the rest of the evaluation to your proposal. Limit your response in this section to 900 words.

Section 3: Addressing Identified Need – 52 Percent of Overall Score (awarded across six questions)

This section makes up the main body of the proposal. Answer each question using narrative format unless otherwise designated. Limit your narrative response to a total of 2000 words across all the questions in this section (tables and lists not included in word count).

- 3.1 Answer the following question using narrative format: What proposed service improvements will you pursue through this grant? How will your proposed service improvements address the needs identified in Section 2 of this proposal? **(10 percent)**
- 3.2 Answer the following question using narrative format: For this initiative to be successful on your campus, who needs to be engaged? What key stakeholders have the ability to institute a program to meet identified need? After assessing current staff and personnel, do additional personnel need to be hired? Provide two bulleted lists. In the first, identify key staff and administrators on your campus for the awarding of credit for prior learning. Then, identify faculty at your institution that may play a role in addressing identified need, particularly by evaluating military experience for the purpose

of awarding academic credit. If lists extend past two pages of full text, append the list to the end of your proposal. Please include a brief statement regarding how expanding current staff responsibilities or hiring new staff addresses identified need and support the efforts of the proposal. **(eight percent)**

- 3.3 Answer the following question using narrative format: What is your plan for communicating with key stakeholders (identified in question 2), and the campus community? What will you do to ensure that the campus community is aware and supportive of efforts to improve services available for student veterans as part of this grant, specifically faculty members and academic affairs administrators? Identify opportunities (events, meetings, forums, planned discussions) occurring between October 2018 and May 2019 to engage staff, administrators, and faculty in discussions on evaluating military experiences for the purpose of awarding academic credit. **(10 percent)**
- 3.4 Answer the following question using narrative format: Explain how your institution’s participation as a grantee will potentially contribute to the larger statewide effort to benefit veterans and service members. What does your institution bring to this initiative? What proposed actions at your institution will enhance this initiative statewide? How can this process be expanded to improve the PLA process for other adult learners? **(eight percent)**
- 3.5 Answer the following question using narrative format: What will your institution do within the first few months (October 2018- December 2018) in order to successfully implement this program? What will your institution do to make this implementation successful? Who will do it? Summarize your narrative by placing key activities and milestones within a table, formatted as below, adding as many rows as necessary to summarize proposed activities. **(eight percent)**

Date	Activity	Person or Person(s) involved

- 3.6 Answer each of the following: **(eight percent)**
 - a) In narrative format, describe potential strategies to market to veterans and service members who do not currently attend your institution. How will veterans and service members know about the availability of credit for military experience?

- b) In narrative format, describe potential strategies to market to veterans and service members currently attending your institution. How will current student veterans know about improvements to services? These strategies need only be *potential* outreach opportunities. Grantees will finalize outreach plans as a deliverable within the grant period.

Section 4: Budget and Budget Narrative – 20 Percent

Budget Narrative: In narrative format, describe how you plan to use funds awarded as part of this grant to address needs as identified in section 2 “Identified Need”. Answer the question: exactly what costs are required for your institution to meet an identified need? For each item, describe the connection between identified needs and requested funding. There is no word limit for this section.

Hiring Plan: If your proposal includes the hiring of new staff or contracted personnel, include a subsection of the budget narrative titled Hiring Plan. Review Appendix D for hiring criteria. Describe how, where, and when any job descriptions will be posted. Include within your listing of stakeholders (from section 3.2) any stakeholders on your campus that approve hiring decisions. A plan must be in place to hire this individual on or before October 1, 2018. Include information on your institution’s commitment to making a hiring decision before this deadline. If approvals are necessary for the hiring process, provide either a plan for gaining those approvals or letters of support that contain those approvals.

Budget: Complete the budget template provided in Appendix C and all appropriate expanded line-item details. Be sure to use both the budget summary and budget line item detail sheets provided. Attach the budget to your proposal in the order described on p. 3, directly after the budget narrative.

V. Legal Information

A. Proposal Review and Award Process

All projects will be scored against a standard rubric (Appendix B) and awarded on a competitive basis. A review committee will be assembled to evaluate all proposals and make recommendations to the Executive Director of THEC.

Project proposals will be distributed to the review committee upon closure of the proposal submission time period on July 13, 2018. The projects will be assigned funding based on ranking until all funds are assigned. The committee will also recommend any required

conditions for funding. The committee's recommendation will be presented to the THEC Executive Director for approval.

B. Title VI Compliance

THEC operates all programs and activities free from discrimination on the basis of sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, or disability.

C. Funding

This RFP is subject to the appropriation and availability of State funds. In the event that the funds are not appropriated or are otherwise unavailable, THEC reserves the right to terminate this RFP upon written notice to the applicants.

THEC reserves the right to fund a 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 THEC determines that doing so is in the best interest of the state of Tennessee.

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 the requirements of the state-funded program, applicable laws and regulations, stated results and outcomes, or the goals and objectives declared in this RFP. THEC staff reserve the right to attend any training or project activity to ensure the fidelity of this program.

Appendix A: Proposed Program Schedule

Target Date	Activity
October 1, 2018	Personnel Hiring Complete
December 2018	Grantees submit project update, with finalized plan for communicating with potential student veterans, and begin executing plan
Spring 2019	Training: Enhancing Methods for Evaluating Academic Credit for Military Experience & Communicating the Availability of Prior Learning Assessment to Student Veterans

This program schedule provides an overview of planned program activities. THEC reserves the right to modify this program schedule and will notify grantees of necessary modifications.

Appendix B: Scoring Rubric

	Exemplary (4 pts)	Adequate (2 pts)	Inadequate (0 pts)	Score	Weight	Comments
Webinar Attendance	Attended webinar.	-	Did not attend webinar.		6%	
Section 1: Introduction	Provides brief context and description of the institution's efforts to serve veterans and service members, using data and information from the specified sources.	Includes a brief explanation of context, but is incomplete or data beyond the specified data sources.	Does not include data from the specified sources or a brief explanation of context.		4%	
Section 2: Identifying Need	A complete narrative that provides evidence of thoughtful reflection on current practices and interprets what areas may need improvement. Areas of need have potential to be addressed through grant funding. <i>Sustainability initiative only</i> . Also, includes thoughtful reflection on institution's progress aligning with the PLA standards listed in the Prior Learning Assessment for Student Veterans self-evaluation since fall 2017.	A somewhat complete narrative that constitutes an account of current practices, but does not provide evidence of need of grant funding or reflective consideration of current practices.	An incomplete evaluation lacking detail and a complete description of current practices.		18%	
Section 3.1: Connecting Proposed Improvements to Identified Needs	Makes logical connections between identified needs and proposed improvements and contains descriptions of opportunities to improve services to student veterans. Includes a compelling case that the grantee will be successful in addressing identified needs.	Does not provide evidence that proposed improvements are connected to identified needs.	Does not address questions posed.		10%	

	Exemplary (4 pts)	Adequate (2 pts)	Inadequate (0 pts)	Score	Weight	Comments
Section 3.2: Identify Stakeholders	Contains evidence that list of key stakeholders is comprehensive and includes people with the ability to institute a program to meet identified need. Includes a realistic assessment regarding the possible need for additional personnel or expanded responsibilities of current staff.	Lacks details or appears to be incomplete. Does not consider expanding responsibilities of current staff or hiring new personnel.	Does not address questions posed.		8%	
Section 3.3: Plan for Campus Engagement	Plan is realistic and provides sufficient detail. There is a compelling argument that the institution will be able to successfully communicate the initiative to the campus community, specifically faculty members and academic affairs administrators. Plan compliments the list of key stakeholders from 3.2 and includes a practical timeline resulting in successful implementation.	An incomplete argument that the institution will be able to successfully communicate the initiative to the campus community and does not compliment the list of stakeholders.	Does not address questions posed.		10%	
Section 3.4: Contribution to Statewide Effort	Provides convincing evidence that the institution's participation will benefit the statewide effort.	Lacks detail or does not fully address the question by providing evidence	Does not address questions posed.		8%	

	Exemplary (4 pts)	Adequate (2 pts)	Inadequate (0 pts)	Score	Weight	Comments
Section 3.5: Implementa- tion Plan	Plan is realistic, provides sufficient detail, and includes a compelling argument that the institution will be able to successfully implement this initiative with considerable action within the first few months. Key activities are summarized in a table with clearly delineated responsibilities.	It is unclear how the institution will proceed in implementing this initiative if awarded grant funds.	Does not address questions posed.		8%	
Section 3.6: Communica- tion to Current and Prospective Students	Strategies are well-thought out, innovative, and make sense for serving both currently attending and prospective student veterans. Strategies are logically connected to identified needs. Response fully describes strategies to communicate improved services to current and prospective veterans.	Proposed strategies are unlikely to fully serve both current student veterans and prospective students or well-thought out explanation and analysis of how they will address identified needs.	Does not address questions posed.		8%	
Section 4: Budget and Budget Narrative	Budget and narrative are completed in the required format, realistic and reasonable given the scope of work, support the goals of the grant, contain a plan for hiring personnel in accordance with instructions listed, and make a convincing case for the connection between requested funds and proposed activities.	Budget and narrative are formatted in accordance with instructions, but do not fully describe the connection between requested funds and proposed activities or are not realistic and reasonable given the scope of work.	Budget and narrative are not formatted correctly or do not provide sufficient detail to describe the connection between funds and proposed activities		20%	

Score Summary Sheet

Section	Proposal Score	Overall Comments
1		
2		
3.1		
3.2		
3.3		
3.4		
3.5		
3.6		
4		

Institution: _____

Proposal Option (highlight or circle one): Personnel Initiative Sustainability Initiative

Reviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C – Budget (cont.)

GRANT BUDGET LINE-ITEM DETAIL (Add Lines as Needed):

SALARIES, BENEFITS & TAXES	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

PROFESSIONAL FEE, GRANT & AWARD²	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

SUPPLIES, TELEPHONE, POSTAGE & SHIPPING, OCCUPANCY, EQUIPMENT RENTAL & MAINTENANCE, PRINTING & PUBLICATIONS	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

OTHER NON-PERSONNEL²	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

CAPITAL PURCHASE²	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

Appendix C – BUDGET (cont.)

GRANT BUDGET LINE-ITEM DETAIL

Line 1 Salaries And Wages

On this line, enter compensation, fees, salaries, and wages paid to grant program staff.

Line 2 Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Enter (a) the organization's contributions to pension plans and programs such as health, life, and disability insurance; and (b) the organization's portion of payroll taxes such as social security and Medicare taxes and unemployment and workers' compensation insurance.

Line 3 Total Personnel Expenses

Add lines 1 and 2.

Line 4 Professional Fees

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

Line 7 Postage And Shipping

Enter the organization's expenses for postage, messenger services, and overnight delivery.

Line 10 Printing And Publications

Enter the organization's expenses for producing printed materials, purchasing books and publications, and buying subscriptions to publications.

Line 11 Travel

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

Line 12 Conferences And Meetings

Enter the organization's expenses for conducting or attending meetings, conferences, and conventions.

Line 15 Grants And Awards

Enter the organization's awards, grants, subsidies, and other pass-through expenditures to individuals and to other organizations, including travel and equipment allowances. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Line 18 Other Nonpersonnel Expenses

Enter the organization's allowable expenses for advertising, promotions, and, recruiting. Include the organization's and employees' membership dues in associations and professional organizations. Include testing fees for software licenses, testing, permits, registrations, etc. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Line 20 Reimbursable Capital Purchases

Enter the organization's purchases of fixed assets and other purchases with a minimum life expectancy of one year. *(A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)*

Appendix D Personnel Hiring Criteria

Where applicable, proposals include descriptions of plans to hire new staff or contracted personnel within the budget narrative section, in the subsection “hiring plan.” These additional requirements must be met to confirm grant funding. **These criteria do not need to be met by the time of proposal submission. The grantee must meet the following requirements by October 1, 2018.** If the grantee plans to hire additional staff, the grantee should initiate the hiring process before October 1, 2018 in order for the staff member to begin on October 1, 2018. If the grantee plans to expand current employee responsibilities, discussions and negotiations must occur prior to October 1, 2018, so the employee will take on the additional duties by October 1, 2018.

Funding is available for newly hired staff members as part of this grant, under the following conditions:

- An existing employee –not the newly hired employee- acts as the project director throughout the grant period.
- A plan is submitted as part of this proposal (in the budget narrative section) to hire the employee on or before October 1, 2018 and fund the position for the entire grant period.
- A plan is in place for the employee to spend more than 60% of their time as an employee engaged in work towards meeting grant criteria by addressing identified needs.
- The employee’s job description contains at least the following items:
 - Assists faculty in establishing or improving procedures to evaluate prior learning for military personnel.
 - Works with campus stakeholders to promote practices that award credit for prior learning for veterans and service members
 - Leads efforts to equate veterans’ experience, training to appropriate academic credit.

Funding is available for stipends and partial salaries of existing faculty and staff members as part of this grant, under the following conditions:

- The employee takes on additional duties connected with this grant on or before October 1, 2018.
- A plan is in place to document employee time spent in support of meeting grant criteria (include in budget narrative section of proposal).

Appendix E – Notice of Intent to Submit

Veteran Reconnect – Notice of Intent to Submit

Name of Higher Education Institution:

Contact Person with name, title, phone, address, and email information:

Please return this information via email by 4:30 PM (CDT) on June 29, 2018

Ken Hanson

615-253-7449

ken.hanson@tn.gov

Appendix F: Cover Sheet

NAME OF INSTITUTION

(Minimum 18 point font)

Veteran Reconnect Grant Program

Project Director Name, Title

Mailing Address

Project Director's Telephone

Project Director's E-mail Address

Funding requested:

\$ _____

**President of Higher Education
Institution**

Project Director

Appendix G: Prior Learning Assessment for Military Students: Self-Evaluation

Introduction

This is a self-evaluation to help you think through critical aspects of your institution's practices in awarding prior learning assessment (PLA) that involves the evaluation of credit for military experience, or otherwise benefits student veterans.

Terms:

PLA is a term used to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment. Put another way, it is learning and knowledge students acquire while living their lives, such as by working, participating in employer training programs, serving in the military, studying independently, volunteering or doing community service, and studying open source courseware.⁴

Credit for military experience is awarded using the American Council on Education (A.C.E.) College Credit Recommendation Service or through direct evaluation of the student's service school transcripts. This term is inclusive of courses or occupations that appear on Joint Services Transcript (JST), a transcript issued by the Department of Defense and reviewed by the A.C.E. that describes the military coursework and occupations that a service member has earned over the course of a military career and recommends academic credit.

Instructions for completing this evaluation

Note: this evaluation results in a description of current conditions at your institution. The results of the evaluation will not affect the score of your grant proposal. The grant proposal rubric is designed to award points based on an honest account of current conditions. **It does not award points based on your institution's current success in prior learning.**

1. This evaluation should be completed by representatives with knowledge of prior learning assessment. Identify a subject matter expert or experts at your institution in the areas of prior learning assessment and credit for military service. Plan to submit only one response per institution.

⁴ Tennessee PLA Taskforce (2012) Recommended Standards in Prior Learning assessment Policy and Practice for Tennessee Public Colleges and Universities.

Appendix G: Prior Learning Assessment for Military Students: Self- Evaluation

2. Complete the assessment items on appendix G, pages 3, 4, and 5. These items describe your institution's process for awarding credit for military service.

3. Complete tables on Appendix G, pages 6-9. These tables summarize your institution's practices as they relate to a standard, that when in place, give students greater opportunities to utilize prior learning assessed credits. Select a number corresponding to the column choices, indicating whether the statement describes your institution. Sum the numbers within the table and place the total in the provided space below the question items.

4. Use table on Appendix G p. 10 to summarize the evaluation using the provided summary table. This evaluation results in reflection of current prior learning assessment (PLA) practices at your institution. The intent of this evaluation is to describe the current state of your efforts. **The results of your evaluation will not affect your proposal score.**

5. Because this is a self-evaluation, you will need to review your own results in relation to some provided standards. To help you review your results, we have provided some indicators of current activities in supporting prior learning assessment (Appendix G, p. 11). These indicators should provide some context to help you compare how practices at your institution might relate to practices across the State of Tennessee.

6. Answer the final narrative question (Appendix G, p.12) to summarize the need at your institution.

Describing Responsibility for Evaluating Credit for Military Experience:

Identify offices and departments responsible for various aspects of evaluating military experience and awarding credit. Place the name of the office most responsible for each item in the right hand column*	
Which office or department is the most common beginning point for a student seeking to have their military service evaluated for academic credit?	
Which office or department is responsible for the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompting students to provide joint services transcripts or records of military service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a preliminary evaluation and reasonable estimate of credits to be earned and disseminates this to adult students appropriately. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the amount of credit to award based on military transcripts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining how credit derived from military service may be counted towards a degree program 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining if credit for military experience is equivalent to specific academic credit offered at the institution 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling students on how to obtain academic credit for evaluated military service 	

*Use the following conventions if possible: Registrar's office, Individual academic departments/deans, Academic affairs office/chief academic officer, Admissions office, Veterans/military service office, Centralized assessment center, Adult and continuing education department, Dedicated Veteran PLA advisor, VA Certifying Official, Dedicated PLA advisor

Narrative

Below, in no more than 300 words, Describe how various departments and offices interact with each other in order to provide students with academic credit for military service.

Describing current process of evaluating credit for military experience:

Use the below table, adding as many additional rows as necessary, to describe the typical process by which students at your institution access academic credit for their evaluated military service. (Example: step 1: The Admissions office informs the student of the availability of credit for military service when a student indicates interest in attending the school.

	Process Steps
Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	
Step 5	
Step 6	

Describing methods of informing students of the availability of credit for military experience:

What intentional methods do you use to inform military or veteran students about the availability of academic credit for evaluated military service? (select all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic advising
<input type="checkbox"/>	Admissions counseling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing information on a PLA specific website
<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty or department interactions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recruitment events
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Student Orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer Orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Veteran services coordinator advising sessions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listing Programs in Student handbook
<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing information at Veteran specific orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listing programs in academic catalog
<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing PLA themed brochure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing Military-Student themed brochure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital Marketing
<input type="checkbox"/>	We do not actively promote PLA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:- _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:- _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:- _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:- _____

Appendix G: Prior Learning Assessment for Military Students: Self- Evaluation

Standard 1: Faculty are supportive of awarding credit for prior learning			
Does not describe my institution	Somewhat describes my institution	Describe my institution	
0	1	2	Faculty members are informed and willing to articulate to various audiences the value of prior learning assessment, particularly for student veterans.
0	1	2	Faculty members are available, willing and actively participate in assessing potential experiences that may be equivalent to credit in their academic discipline or subject matter expertise.
0	1	2	Faculty members are familiar with the steps, tools, and procedures in the process of awarding academic credit for military experience.
0	1	2	Faculty members understand how PLA in Tennessee fits into the greater goal of Drive to 55 and can articulate the significance, particularly for student veterans.
0	1	2	Faculty members are actively engaged in conversations at their institution and within their academic departments to represent the value and credibility of prior learning.
0	1	2	Faculty members have knowledge of practices of awarding PLA among other institutions and with faculty members across Tennessee.
0	1	2	Faculty members also have an understanding of the benefits of PLA for student veterans
0	1	2	Faculty members are aware of where answers to common PLA questions can be found and collaborate as necessary on PLA opportunities for student veterans.
___ Total (add all selected numbers)			

Appendix G: Prior Learning Assessment for Military Students: Self- Evaluation

Standard 2: Policies and practices are currently in place that support and promote acceptance of credit for prior learning			
Does not describe my institution	Somewhat describes my institution	Describe my institution	
0	1	2	Academic credit for military experience is only awarded after the student has consulted with an advisor or appropriate staff member about the possibility and advisability of seeking credit for PLA.
0	1	2	A list of the forms of PLA credit accepted by an institution/department is documented and available to student veterans, faculty and other stakeholders.
0	1	2	As PLA policies affecting student veterans differ between departments, the institution maintains documentation of the processes and rationale for the use or non-use of PLA credit.
0	1	2	Institution considers awarding all types of PLA credit to student veterans, including but not limited to the acceptance of portfolios, credit for military coursework, and credit for military experience.
0	1	2	Admissions counselors have procedures to introduce and educate potential student on opportunities for PLA credit and credit for military experience and training.
0	1	2	Academic departments have documented, clear, concise and comprehensive policies regarding the processes and acceptance of PLA within their division.
0	1	2	PLA policies are readily available for students via multiple mechanisms (for example: via the academic catalog and institution website).
___ Total (add all selected numbers)			

Appendix G: Prior Learning Assessment for Military Students: Self- Evaluation

Standard 3: Faculty and staff have resources and knowledge supporting efforts to evaluate prior learning, especially for student veterans			
Does not describe my institution	Somewhat describes my institution	Describe my institution	
0	1	2	Institution offers professional development and orientation opportunities that empower new faculty and staff to understand academic credit for military experience.
0	1	2	Institution provides an online guide for advisors and faculty members that include institutional and departmental information, procedures and policies regarding PLA that may be accessed by student veterans.
0	1	2	Institution provides a step-by-step checklist for faculty and staff, that provides information on how a student veteran might receive credit for military experience of other forms of prior learning assessment.
0	1	2	Changes to institutional policies affecting prior learning assessment are communicated to academic departments.
0	1	2	Institution has central repository of all academic departmental PLA policies.
0	1	2	Institution has a dedicated PLA coordinator/advisor that acts as an expert in evaluating credit for prior learning.
___ Total (add all selected numbers)			

Appendix G: Prior Learning Assessment for Military Students: Self- Evaluation

Standard 4: The awarding of Prior Learning Assessment is a transparent and measurable process designed to benefit student veterans.			
Does not describe my institution	Somewhat describes my institution	Describe my institution	
0	1	2	Resources (checklists, job aids, other documents) are in place to ensure that student veterans with the same experiences receive consistent awards of academic credit.
0	1	2	Institution documents previous awards of credit for military experience by course name, number and program applied.
0	1	2	Policies affecting academic credit for military experience are readily available for students via more than one mechanism (for example: via the academic catalog and institution website and advising sessions).
0	1	2	The institution's website describing prior learning assessment is updated to match current policies affecting student veterans.
0	1	2	Marketing materials describing credit for prior learning are available to student veterans.
0	1	2	Student veterans are informed about PLA and the opportunities to fit it into their degree program <i>before enrolling</i> at the institution.
0	1	2	Student veterans are informed about PLA and the opportunities to fit it into their degree program <i>upon enrolling</i> at the institution.
0	1	2	Institution sets a goal for the percent of adult students who receive credit for prior learning
0	1	2	Institution actively tracks GPA, persistence towards degree, or completion rates for students who have received prior learning assessment credits
0	1	2	Institution actively tracks credit awarded based on PLA by academic unit
___ Total (add all selected numbers)			

Summarizing Results

Input the sum listed in the bottom of the corresponding tables on the previous four pages. Divide in order to determine a percentage score.

This evaluation results in a summary of current conditions at your institution. The totals listed in the table below will not affect points awarded in evaluation of this grant. The percent in the final column serves as an indicator of how closely the current practices at your institution match each standard.

Because this is a self-evaluation, you will need to review your own results in relation to some provided standards. The table below provides a quick summary of the totals from the tables above. Lower percentages may indicate that there is potential to make improvements around the provided standard. Higher percentages may indicate less need for changes to current processes.

In evaluating your overall grant proposal, **a higher or lower percent in the table will not mean either more or less points.** Scorers of the grant proposal have been instructed to award points based only on the existence of an honest interpretation of the current state of your PLA efforts.

Standard	Totals from tables above				Percentage (Report as xx %)
Standard 1: Faculty are supportive of the awarding of academic credit for prior learning		÷	16	=	
Standard 2: Policies and practices are currently in place that support and promote acceptance of credit for prior learning for student veterans.		÷	14	=	
Standard 3: Faculty and staff have resources and knowledge supporting efforts to evaluate prior learning, especially for student veterans		÷	12	=	
Standard 4: The awarding of Prior Learning Assessment is a transparent and measurable process, designed to benefit student veterans.		÷	20	=	

Providing context for your self-evaluation

Your score on Standard one (Appendix G, p.6) may be indicative of need to communicate the benefits of prior learning assessment in order to gain champions. Veteran Reconnect grantees will identify the stakeholders most likely to influence the awarding of credit for military service. Grantees will work to promote prior learning assessment internally to those stakeholders.

Your score on standard two (Appendix G,p.7) may be indicative of the need to review policies in order to ensure your campus is promoting prior learning assessment in a consistent manner. Veteran Reconnect Grantees will take part in training and consultation with the goal of informing current practices that may affect their ability to award academic credit for military experience.

Your score on standard three (Appendix G,p.8) may be indicative of need to provide resources, information, or assigning personnel to the task of evaluating credit for prior learning. Veteran Reconnect grantees will address opportunities to increase knowledge of prior learning assessment practices within the institution by producing those resources and empowering personnel to act.

Your derived score on standard four (Appendix G,p.9) may be an indicator of need to improve external communication around the availability of prior learning assessment for student veterans. Veteran Reconnect grantees will be asked to create pre-articulated course equivalencies based on evaluations from the American Council on Education's recommendations, and work to communicate the availability of these equivalencies to students before they enroll on campus.

Narrative

In no more than 900 words, reflect upon your responses to the standards in this evaluation. Are there areas of strength you identified? What actions are you implementing to sustain the areas of strength? Are there areas of need you identified? Provide an overall interpretation of what areas may need of improvement. *Once completed, this narrative will appear in the body of your proposal.*