



**NYC PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS JOSEPH P. DWYER PEER SUPPORT FUND
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
EPIN: 06325P0001**

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services is pleased to announce the establishment of the NYC Private First-Class (PVC) Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Fund. We are seeking Requests for Proposals (RFP) from for-profit and not-for-profit organizations which support the mission of increasing social engagement and connectivity for U.S. Military Veterans and their families. The means by which we aim to fulfill this goal is by providing Veteran peer-to-peer support through the delivery of a host of socialization programs. Examples include, but are not limited to recreational, artistic, athletic, culinary, educational, health and wellness programs.

This RFP consists of the following sections:

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BACKGROUND

The mission of the NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for US Military Service Members—past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families.

Recognizing that New York City is home to approximately 210,000 prior and current Military Service Members in addition to an estimated 420,000 immediate Veteran & Military family

members, DVS seeks to do everything that it can on behalf of the City of New York to repay our Veteran community for their sacrifice. In partnership with hundreds of community-based organizations and several city, state, and federal entities, DVS enables those whom we assist to receive VA claims-related benefits, housing support, access to VA healthcare, employment resources, educational offerings, mental health programming, and several other amenities.

Despite the array of programs and services available for Veterans, a 2021 community survey conducted by DVS revealed that one out of four NYC-based Active-Duty Service Members, Reservists, National Guardsmen, and Veterans say that they are lonely three or more days per week. Only one-third of lonely respondents feel as though they have someone they can approach when they are in need; having someone to approach is defined as having a person with whom one can share joys and sorrows on at least three days per week. Moreover, when asked how likely they are to seek help for emotional distress, 40% of all lonely respondents would be somewhat or very unlikely to do so.

The PFC Joseph P. Dwyer (“Dwyer”) Peer Support Program, first established by the State of New York during the 2012-2013 legislative session, aims to reduce Veteran isolation and associated mental health issues by having Veteran community members meet with fellow members in secure, comfortable settings; this helps them cope with emotional issues caused during or exacerbated by their military service. In essence, the program builds a unique healing community whereby Veterans and their loved ones integrate into a life-affirming support system, enabling them to successfully reset and acclimate to civilian life.

The Dwyer Program exists in 25 counties throughout New York State. New York localities that have received funding through the program ascribe to a diverse cross-section of intervention modalities. For the first time, the City of New York has been awarded funds to establish its own program for up to one year.

The PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer to Peer Program Implementation Guide issued by SUNY/Albany’s School of Social Welfare recommends that “rather than replicating traditional clinical support services (e.g., counseling or therapy), the Dwyer Programs offer non-clinical peer-delivered supports.” Many Veterans and Veteran family members avoid traditional provider-delivered mental health services because of stigma (actual or perceived), logistical and administrative hurdles, previous negative experiences, and other reasons. Seeking help is not always a common experience for Veterans and their loved ones. Further, many Veterans distrust those professionals who are not Veteran community members themselves.

DEFINING VETERAN

DVS defines “Veteran” using the same standard codified in the New York City Charter, Chapter 75, Section 3101. This reads as follows:

The term “Veteran” means a person who serves or has served in the active military service, including the navy, coast guard, air force, marines, army, space force, and their respective national guard or reserve components, regardless of discharge status or time served. “Veteran” also means a person who serves or has served in the United States public health service or as a commissioned member of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration.

Summary of the Request for Proposals:

A. Objectives:

DVS intends to enter Contracts with a number of vendors as the budget allows, for various services aimed at health-seeking behavior for Veterans across New York City, in line with the DWYER program. Services will include, but are not limited to, those that relate to arts, music, health and wellness, fitness, culinary, education, and community-based programs aimed towards peaking the wide interests of Veterans including their family members, of all service eras, genders, races/ethnicities, disability statuses, ages, and other demographics.

Each proposal submitted as a result of this RFP will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored by an evaluation committee, based upon the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP.

B. Contract Term / Not to Exceed Amount:

The term of the contract resulting from this RFP shall commence as of the date of registration by the Comptroller and shall remain in effect for a period of 5 (five) years. We anticipate the contract period to be October 15, 2024 to October 14, 2029.

At the Commissioner’s sole discretion, the term of this contract may be subject to renewal for an additional 3 (three) years.

C. Selected Vendors and Task Orders:

Vendors shall be evaluated and selected based on the Selection Process outlined under the ‘*Proposal Evaluation and Contract Award Procedures*’ section. Selected Vendors shall be put on an approved list of vendors who may be issued a task order during the contract term. Task orders will be issued to Vendors based on various factors which include, but are not limited to, program offerings, maximum veteran participation, and cost. Task orders will be issued based on the service as proposed by the vendor in response to the RFP. Depending on the proposed services and various program offerings, the agency shall issue a task order via a Mini-RFP Process. NOTE: This RFP will result in a contract award that allows only vendors who were awarded to be issued task orders under the terms of the task order contracts DVS releases under the Mini-RFP process. The vendors awarded this contract will have the opportunity to apply to any Mini-RFP task order that DVS releases.

Payments to vendors will be made in two installments for each task order – one at the outset of services, and the final payment halfway through the covered period for each task order.

Scope of Work:

DVS' goal is to provide peer-to-peer support programs that will empower US Military Service Members, past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families—to enhance their social engagement, fortify their emotional wellness, and encourage help-seeking behavior, thereby reducing social isolation. We envision offering a broad selection of arts, music, health and wellness, fitness, culinary, educational, and other community-based programs aimed towards peaking the wide interests of Veterans, including their family members, of all service eras, genders, races/ethnicities, disability statuses, ages, and other demographics. These services must be held in person and not virtually.

We ask providers to create a compassionate and accepting environment where Veterans (caregivers, survivors, and families) can engage in a novel activity with other participants and by doing so build comradery and mutual support for each other. We believe this can best occur if one consistent type of activity is offered rather than multiple activities rolled into one program. Our intent is for participants to show up on a regular basis to develop cohesion rather than opting in or out of programs that offer different activities.

Collaboration among organizations is encouraged especially for recruiting program participants. Consider contacting local Veteran Service Organizations in your communities like the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans, Catholic War Veterans, Student Veterans of America located at NYC colleges and universities, etc. to strengthen your proposal.

Examples of Services to be Offered to Veteran Community:

Animal Assisted Modalities

- A visitation program in which animals accompany their owners to a facility and visit with program participants. Animals should be temperament tested, given a complete veterinary screening, and receive obedience training before beginning to work with participants. Animals for consideration include dogs, cats, horses, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc.
- Different types of equine-assisted therapy include therapeutic horseback riding, hippotherapy, equine-assisted learning, and equine-assisted psychotherapy. Instructors are required to hold current Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association (EAGLA) certification and operate an EAGLA model program.

Somatic Modalities

- Various body-centered therapies that use mind-body exercises and other physical techniques to help release the pent-up tension that negatively affects a participant's physical and emotional wellbeing. A few examples of these therapies include, but are not limited to, yoga, meditation, Pilates, and martial arts.

Expressive Modalities

- Various uses of the creative arts as a form of therapy including art therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, music therapy, writing therapy, poetry therapy, film, and psychodrama. Expressive therapies assume that people can heal through many forms of creative expression.

Educational Programs

- Build social connections and provide stimulating conversations through exposure to a host of arts, cultural, history, civics, science, and other learning programs that spike the interest of Veteran groups.

Culinary Arts Instruction

- Culinary arts instruction uses cooking as a means of communication and expression while learning life skills and tools. It has the benefit of reducing stress, improving time management, and increasing self-esteem.

Community Construction Programs

- Leads teams of Veteran volunteers in building, repairing, and renovating community-based facilities and homes in under-resourced neighborhoods or for under-resourced New Yorkers.

Note: Providers are encouraged to propose other creative programs. The examples provided above are not all-inclusive. The main goal is to provide services that are appealing to the Veteran population and that fall in line with the identified scope of work. The following questions will help facilitate program development within the Scope of Work identified.

Compliance with Local Law 34

Pursuant to Local Law 34 of 2007, amending the City's Campaign Finance Law, the City is required to establish a computerized database containing the names of any "person" that has "business dealings with the city" as such terms are defined in the Local Law. In order for the City to obtain necessary information to establish the required database, vendors responding to this solicitation are required to complete the [Doing Business Data](#) Form in PASSPort with when they are submitting their proposal. For information on how to complete the Doing Business Data Form in PASSPort, please see "Manage Responses // LL34 Compliance" in Attachment F, "Instructions for Responding to the RFP (RFX)".

New for 2018: Organizations which hold 10% or more ownership of the entity must now be reported. Beginning in January 2018, an entity must submit a DBDF that certifies whether one or more organizations own or control 10% or more of the entity. Until such a DBDF has been received by Doing Business Accountability, a DBDF submitted with a filing status of 'No Change' will not be accepted. To determine if Doing Business Accountability has received such a certification from your entity, contact doingbusiness@mocs.nyc.gov or at 212-788-8104.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD PROCEDURES

Selection Process:

DVS will award the highest technically rated vendors. A DVS Evaluation Committee will review, evaluate, and score all technical proposals in accordance with the criteria described below. This evaluation and scoring will determine each proposer's technical score. DVS reserves the right to interview proposers for the purpose of clarifying their technical proposals, after which their scores may be reevaluated. Proposers will be ranked in accordance with their total technical scores. The ACCO will award the highest rated vendors, who will receive contracts pursuant to timely completion of negotiations and the contract being determined to be in the best interests of the City.

B. Technical Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

The proposals submitted will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. General [Weight 10%]
2. Outreach [Weight 10%]
3. Project Plan [Weight 25%]
4. Retention [Weight 10%]
5. Previous Experience [Weight 15%]
6. Referrals and Resource Dissemination [Weight 10%]
7. Suicide Prevention/Military Cultural Competency Training [Weight 10%]
8. Program Measurements and Reporting [Weight 10%]

TOTAL: 100%

QUESTIONS REQUIRING RESPONSES IN VENDOR PROPOSALS

Please include in your proposal (in PASSPort) responses to the questions below. Your responses will be assigned a score for the maximum listed number associated with the questions. Each proposal submitted as a result of this RFP will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored by an evaluation committee, based upon the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP. Please see below the different sections found within the Questionnaire tab of PASSPort and note the technical weight that will be assigned to each section.

General (10%)

1. How many eligible participants will your organization commit to serving for the duration of the program?
2. Identify whether your organization or program will serve Veterans, Service Members, their families, surviving spouses, caregivers, or a combination thereof.
3. What are the eligibility requirements for your program that will form the basis of how you select the participants?
4. How will your organization ensure equity and nondiscrimination in your selection of participants? DVS is committed to advancing equity and support for underserved and underrepresented communities. DVS requires awardees to not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, or political affiliation.

Outreach (10%)

1. How will your organization conduct outreach to recruit Veterans and their family members to participate in the program?
2. Which Veteran Service Organization(s) has/have agreed to work with your organization in helping you to recruit program participants? (Letter of Support highly recommended)
3. What are your organization's previous involvements with any Veteran Service Organization(s)?

Project Plan (25%)

1. Describe the type of in-person group program your organization will provide to the same cohort of participants.
2. What are the benefits participants will receive enrolling in your organization's program?
3. How will your organization build a comradery among the same cohort of participants?
4. Which location(s) will be holding your organization's program?
5. How many sessions and what is the frequency of the program offered to participants?
6. What are the days and times of the day your program will be offered?

Retention (10%)

1. How will your program managers retain Veterans and encourage them to continue their participation in the program?
2. Will your organization offer incentives to maintain participation? If so, what kinds of incentives?

Previous Experience (15%)

1. How many years has your organization have in providing this service?
2. How many years does your organization have experience serving Veterans?
3. Elaborate on the experience the organization's staff had in providing this service.
4. Provide a listing and brief bios of the staff members who will provide this service.
5. Discuss how many staff members will be on-site during program activities.

Referrals and Resource Dissemination (10%)

1. Describe how your organization will disseminate information about DVS, VA, and other information useful for the Veterans Community
2. DVS hosts VetConnectNYC, a multi-service provider network of nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Describe your organization's willingness to refer program participants to DVS to connect them to services.

Suicide Prevention/Military Cultural Competency Training (10%)

1. Describe your staff's willingness to participate in suicide prevention training provided by DVS or a third-party provider.
2. Describe your staff's willingness to participate in military cultural competency training offered by DVS or a third-party provider.

Program Measurements and Reporting (10%)

1. Will your organization distribute surveys, which are developed by DVS, to participants to gauge their level of health-seeking behavior and connectivity to other people in the same cohort?
2. Will your organization deliver quarterly reports to DVS based on survey responses and feedback?
3. Will your organization provide quarterly reports about the progress of the program, successes and challenges experienced by your organization in providing the sessions, and an accounting of expenses associated with the program for reimbursement?

BUDGET

Please complete chart below for Staffing and Other than Personal Expenses for duration of program for up to 12 months.

ITEMIZED BUDGET					
Staffing Expenses					
Position	Hourly Rate	Fringes	# of hours per session	# of sessions	Total
Sub-Total Staffing					
Other than Personal Expenses			Cost per session	# of sessions	Total
Supplies & Materials					
Insurance					
Food					

Rent					
Incentives					
Transportation					
Partner Contribution					
Advertising					
Printing					
Staff Training					
Itemize Other Expenses (Note, DVS is capped at paying no more than 10% for overhead costs)					
Sub-Total OTPS					
Grand Total					

Financial Documents

Please attach a copy of your current business or organizational budget for the current fiscal year.

Evaluation Survey:

Vendors will be asked to complete a custom survey every 6 months. The survey will be used to monitor progress, attendance, and overall success of the program.

Basis of Selecting Vendors Approved for Issuing Task Orders:

Proposals will first be reviewed for responsiveness. Any proposal determined to be non-responsive will be rejected. A contract will be awarded to the responsive and responsible proposer(s) who is/are ranked in the order of lowest price per technical point, which shall be calculated by dividing the proposed price (or Best and Final Offer price, if applicable) by the final technical score.

Proposers shall be evaluated and selected based on the Selection Process outlined below. Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of at least 3 members. Each member will review and score each proposal. Those scores will be averaged together for the vendors total technical score. The evaluation committee will then decide if they need additional information in form of oral presentation or other means. Best and Final Offer round is required to get new proposals from vendors which will result in the final technical scores. The Agency reserves the right to conduct site visits and/or interviews and/or to request that proposers make presentations and/or demonstrations, as the Agency deems applicable and appropriate. Although discussions may be conducted with proposers submitting acceptable proposals, the Agency reserves the right to award contracts on the basis of initial proposals

received, without discussions; therefore, the proposer's initial proposal should contain its best technical and price terms.

Based on the final technical scores of the proposals, after any oral presentations, discussions and/or technical Best and Final Offers, if applicable, have been held, the Agency will establish a shortlist - through a technically viable cutoff score of 70% - and those proposals still under consideration for award will be ranked in order of lowest price per technical point. The vendor with the lowest price per technical point will be offered an award which will be subject to timely completion of negotiations and a fair and reasonable price. Should negotiations fall through, the agency reserves the right to award the vendor with the second lowest price per technical point, again, subject to the timely completion of negotiations, and so on until the agency is satisfied with the award(s) it has made. The agency also reserves the right to make no awards.

Lowest price per technical point is calculated by dividing the proposed price (or Best and Final Offer price, if applicable) by the final technical score, taking into consideration the overall quality of the proposal as measured against factors or criteria as set forth in the RFP and successful negotiation of the overall cost.

Selected awarded vendors shall be put on an approved list of vendors who are eligible to potentially receive a task order during the contract term. The agency will issue a task order via a Mini-RFP Process where the RFP will be released to only the awarded vendor(s). These proposals will be scored. Task orders will be issued to vendors based on the score they earned on their proposal and overall costs as funds will allow.

NOTE: This RFP will result in an awarded contract with a vendor(s), and all awarded vendors will be added to a list of pre-approved vendors. When DVS releases task orders via the mini-RFP process, only vendors awarded this contract may submit proposals pursuant to the terms of the task order contracts.

PASSPort:

To respond to this Solicitation and all other Human/Client Service solicitations, organizations must have a PASSPort account. Proposals and Prequalification applications will ONLY be accepted through PASSPort. If you do not have a PASSPort account or an Approved PASSPort HHS Accelerator PQL Application, please visit nyc.gov/passport to get started.

Please allow sufficient time to complete and submit proposals, which includes entering information, uploading documents, and entering log-in credentials.

Providers are responsible for the timely electronic submission of proposals. DVS strongly recommends that proposers complete and submit their proposals at least 24 hours in advance of the proposal due date and time.

Resources such as user guides and videos are listed on www.nyc.gov/passport. For more information about submitting a proposal through the PASSPort system, please submit an inquiry to the MOCS Service desk at nyc.gov/mocshelp.

Another option is to register for assistance with Nelson Ortiz at the LaGuardia Community College Business Services Apex Accelerator. All services are free of charge. Please click on the separate links below for nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

NON-PROFIT -

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/LaGuardiaBusinessServicesVeteransServices@CUNY907.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/> [outlook.office365.com]

FOR PROFIT: Please have the for-profit businesses register with us at

[LaGCC APEX e-Center \(ecenterdirect.com\)](http://LaGCCAPEXecenterdirect.com) [lagapex.ecenterdirect.com] . All Services are free of charge.

Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email to schedule a one-on-one appointment. The email provides links to pick a date and time that works for you.

Director Nelson Ortiz can also be contacted by email at lagcc@cuny.edu or 718-757-7408.

Payee Information Portal (PIP):

In addition, for a vendor to do business with the City of New York, they need to register in PIP. This link Payee Information Portal is where they register and receive payments through the City of New York. Should you need additional PIP guidance, please don't hesitate to contact the FISA call center at 212-857-1777 or email: PIP@fisa-opa.nyc.gov."

Questions Regarding this solicitation:

All communication with DVS about this Solicitation should be done through PASSPort via the Questions with the Buyer tab or via email at dvsdwyer@veterans.nyc.gov

The Agency cannot guarantee a response to written questions regarding this Solicitation received less than one week prior to the proposal due date.

SUBMISSION:

This RFP calls for Respondents to submit a response no later than August 30th at 2PM.

INFORMATION SESSION:

An optional information session will be held virtually (with telephone access) at the following dates and times, via Microsoft Teams:

Those who wish to attend this virtual session should RSVP by email to DVSDwyer@veterans.nyc.gov no later than 07/29/2024, Meeting link will be emailed to those who RSVP'd for the session.

TIMELINE

Time Period	Milestone
07/25/2024 9AM	Release RFP
08/01/2024 11AM	Optional Information Session (Virtual)
08/05/2024 2PM	Optional Information Session (Virtual)
08/23/2024 5PM	Last day to submit Questions in PASSPort
08/30/2024 5PM	Last day to submit your response