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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

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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)**

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<sup>2</sup> 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.