

# Veterans Resource Office (VRO) Plan

**Victor Valley College**

**Financial Aid and The Veterans Office**

**18422 Bear Valley Rd. Victorville, California 92395**

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## **1.0 Executive Summary**

This proposal presents the phased plan for the establishment of a Veterans Resource Office on the Victor Valley College Campus. The plan begins with Phase I – which consists primarily of self service and peer support options. Phase II – will maximize the use of existing campus resources by veterans and integrate support from the office of veteran’s affairs. Phase III – will integrate campus resources within the center as sustainable budgets become available to serve the important population.

## **2.0 Mission:**

The VRO offers a place through which Veterans of the United States Armed Forces can access resources and support from peers, college staff and community services to enhance their ability to succeed at Victor Valley College.

The VRO mission is aligned with the Victor Valley College mission in that the center will result in:

- **Cultivating** intellectual growth, social responsibility, environmental stewardship, cultural enrichment, and economic development among veteran students
- **Creating** exceptional and accessible lifelong learning opportunities that afford veteran students and their dependents within our expanding communities the attainment of knowledge and skills necessary for success in the global economy.
- **Embracing** differences in our communities by integrating the wealth of multicultural knowledge and wisdom into a cohesive and resourceful learning environment for all.
- **Empower** each veteran student to learn by modeling academic integrity, democratic citizenship, and meaningful contribution to society.

## **3.0 Our Goals:**

1. Establish a Veterans Resource Office on campus in alignment with the Student Success Act and the Chancellor’s Veterans Commitment Initiative.
2. Increase the persistence and success of veteran students attending Victor Valley College
3. Support the transition of veteran students to civilian life.

#### **4.0 Who We Are:**

The VRO is organized by the Victor Valley College Student Services Division with input from veteran students, the Victor Valley College Veterans Club and with support from community agencies including the Office of Veterans Affairs.

#### **5.0 What We Will Do:**

Through a phased implementation plan, we will work together to create a friendlier Military, Veteran and Military Dependent environment at Victor Valley College. This will result in the establishment of a support center for Veteran students. As a result, the division of student services will meet recommendations found in the 2013-2014 PRAISE reports and assist the college and students in reaching their goals by:

- Foster an inclusive campus climate where all are welcomed, respected, and valued.
- Assist the Veteran student in moving forward with accessing the internet for all VVC enrollment requirements and the application process.
- Support VVC Educational Master plan by making available VA work-study positions for veteran students and dependent VA students.
- Providing information to Veterans regarding Transfer Center resources availability for students planning on transferring.
- Ensure all available financial aid is made known to the Veteran at VVC and to those who plan to transfer.
- Give the Veteran student all the tools they may require, so there is no hesitation when transferring.

#### **6.0 Why We Should Do It:**

As our nation emerges from two wars and multiple international conflicts, veterans are returning to the United States in record numbers. In fact, the veteran student population in California community College jumped 60% since 2007. These men and women have served our country and are now hoping for a productive life back at home. Access to higher education is a sacred promise that our nation has made to its military. This promise has been embraced by the California Community College Chancellors Office which issued a challenge to community colleges to improve services to veterans when it issued its Commitment to Veterans Initiative in 2012. Victor Valley College Interim Superintendent / President Peter Allan signed a commitment to participate in the statewide initiative.

Veterans are a unique population who face common challenges. Their shared experiences result in a cultural bond that can be exploited for their benefit and success in college. These experiences differ significantly from the general population making it difficult for them to assimilate into mainstream

society without support. Some of the key reasons for creating a specialized place for Veterans to access peer support and available resources include:

- Military and Veterans understand each other
- Difficulty readjusting to college and civilian life
- Military and personal life experiences affect academic studies
- High risk of prior mental and physical trauma affecting their academic success and risk of just giving up and dropping out
- High population and increased numbers since the Post 9-11 GI Bill came into effect (2009) of Veterans in the community and on campus.

## **7.0 How We Will Do It:**

Through a three phased plan the college will enhance veterans support services without burdening existing budgets and resulting in increased success for veteran students.

### **Phase I: July 2014 – December 2014**

Phase I establishes a location for what will be known as the “VRO.” Utilizing a name familiar to veterans, this location will promote peer support and provide self-service access to veteran information from a variety of sources. Phase I will require very little investment in startup costs or support from college personnel.

#### **Steps in Phase I**

- Identify a location – (Student Activities Center – old foundation office)
- Use existing campus resources (in storage) and work with Foundation to solicit donations of furniture and fixtures to avoid any expenditures required to complete this phase.
- With these resources:
  - Create a veteran’s lounge area within the “VRO” for peer to peer socialization and support.
  - Develop a self-service library stocked with books, videos and forms provided by campus departments and community agencies which serve students.
  - Provide a single office to be used by students for informal peer support, community / alumni mentors and occasional visits from veterans related college staff during peak periods using existing VA budgets.
- Conduct Veteran Student Orientations at the VRO to explain the steps to enrollment within an emotionally safe environment. Veteran students will learn about Admission Application, Assessment, Counseling, Priority Registration, e-benefits, GI Bill updates, Financial Aid, and on and off campus resources.
- Open the VRO for 32 hours per week – Staffed with VA Work Study Students and VA Certifying Officials.

### **Phase II: January 2015 – June 2016**

Phase II expands upon resources offered through the VRO to provide more specialized services.

### **Steps in Phase II**

- Continue resources available in Phase I
- Organize veteran's events and activities to encourage additional use of the VRO (i.e. a veteran's job fair).
- Provide Behavioral Health Workshops from the Military Department, State of California
- Make available the Incognito Interactive Training, provided free by the CCC Student Mental Health Program.
- Continued utilization of VA Work Study Staff and VA Certifying Officials.
- Secure student tutors through federal work study program for support with basic skills.
- Establish a peer guide program to help veteran students find veteran services on campus where they currently reside.
- Examine current student service and financial aid budgets (i.e. BFAP) to develop recommendations for funding of future services as deemed valuable to enhancing veteran student success.
- Work with the Foundation to solicit grants and donations to provide veterans services and programs to enhance success among veteran students.

### **Phase III: July 2016 - ongoing**

Phase III will expand upon the VRO offerings to provide full Veteran Resource Center offerings subject to the identification of sustainable resources to support its operations.

### **Steps in Phase III**

- Continue resources available in Phase I and Phase II.
- Add key textbooks to the VRO Resource Library
- Develop a formal community / alumni mentor program to provide life skills advice that will assist veterans in assimilating into mainstream society and secure employment
- Develop schedule of student support services to be provided at the Veterans Resource Office. This will include staff from counseling/Veterans' Office and financial aid who can advise veteran students.
- Establish a small computer lab within the center to provide students will access to online veterans services and additional resources for advancing their studies.
- Provide online training for faculty, staff and mentors to promote improved service to veteran students.

### **Management:**

The Veteran Resource Office plan and ongoing activities will be managed by the Director, Financial Aid and staffed by VA Work Study Students and VA Certifying Official(s). All duties and services will be an extension of what is currently being provided by our VA Window 12, in BLDG 52.

## 8.0 Start-up Cost Summary

START UP COSTS				
Budget Category	Account	Expenses	Source	Notes
Faculty	1000	\$ -		
Staff	2000	\$ 520	Maintenance	Estimated labor to move / install furniture
Benefits	3000	\$ 156	Maintenance	Estimated benefit cost to move install furniture
Supplies	4000	\$ 2,500	VA	Resource library & marketing
Services	5000			
Equipment	6000	\$ 1,500	Foundation	Staff computer
Student Expenses	7000	\$ -		
		\$ 4,676		

Current VA budget paid to VVC from the Annual Reporting Fee from the VA is between \$12 and \$15 per student (depending on student status) current budget for 2013-14 = \$5595. Furnishings for the center will be found in college surplus or obtained through donations obtained with the help of the Victor Valley College Foundation.

## 9.0 Budget/Cost of Ownership

ESTIMATED BUDGET: PHASE I (JULY 2014-DECEMBER 2014)				
Budget Category	Account	Expenses	Source	Notes
Faculty	1000	\$ -		
Staff	2000	\$ 2,560	BFAP / VA	SSS @ 80 hours per semester
Benefits	3000	\$ 768	BFAP/ VA	SSS benefits
Equipment	4000	\$ -		
Supplies	5000	\$ -	VA	For resource library & marketing
Capital Improvement	6000	\$ -		
Student Expenses	7000	\$ -		
		\$ 3,328		

ESTIMATED BUDGET: PHASE II (JAN 2015-JUNE 2016)				
Budget Category	Account	Expenses	Source	Notes
Faculty	1000	\$ -		
Staff	2000	\$ 7,680	BFAP / VA /Donations	SSS @ 80 hours per semester
Benefits	3000	\$ 2,304	BFAP / VA /Donations	SSS benefits
Equipment	4000	\$ -		
Supplies	5000	\$ 2,500	VA	For resource library & marketing
Capital Improvement	6000	\$ -		
Student Expenses	7000	\$ 19,200	FWS	Two FWS paid veteran tutors (if available)
		\$ 31,684		

ESTIMATED BUDGET: PHASE III (JULY 2016 - JUNE 2017)				
Budget Category	Account	Expenses	Source	Notes
Faculty	1000	\$ -		
Staff	2000	\$ 10,880	BFAP / VA /Donations	SSS @ 160 hrs/term; IT @ 20 hrs / year
Benefits	3000	\$ 3,264	BFAP / VA /Donations	SSS & IT Benefits
Supplies	4000	\$ 2,500	VA	Resource library & marketing
Services	5000	\$ -		
Equipment	6000	\$ 5,000	Grants / Donations	Computers
Student Expenses	7000	\$ 12,800	FWS	Two FWS paid veteran tutors (if available)
		\$ 34,444		

Note: While anticipated costs are shown here, all SSS staff are existing positions. No new hires are anticipated. No increase in budgets is required as this is simply a dedication of existing resources to serve the growing population of veterans on a limited basis. Additional support will be provided by VA Certifying Officers and VA funded Work Study. New equipment and supplies will be provided with support from the Victor Valley College Foundation and community supporters.

Below is an example of how the VRO will leverage available resources to limit the expense to the district while maximizing support for veteran students.

- Materials\*
- Staff (currently funded positions)
- Education counselor (currently funded position)
- VA Work study (VA funded)
- Community events (free from VVC Veterans club)
- State & Government level support (free from county, state and federal sources)
- Marketing (free from VVC Veterans website, VVC marquee, posters and fliers)
- Computers\*
- Paper, pens, notebooks\*
- Phones\*

Asterisk budgeted items listed above will be funded from the current VA budget Victor Valley College receives directly from Veterans Affairs (VA). Although the amount varies each year the current funding is \$12 or \$15 per student (depending on status), or \$5595.00 for the school year 2013-14. This amount of funding has proven to be sufficient during the past and routinely has excess funding available. We will be rotating staff between the existing office in building 52 and the VRO in building 44, thus no additional budget for personnel is required.

## **10.0 Summary**

VVC is obligated to follow the requirements of the Student Success Act mentioned on many of the Praise reports, which includes orientation, assessment and Ed Plans for new students. The opening of the VRO and later a full Veterans Resource Center will promote an increased success rate for these veteran students by providing the student with the tools for matriculation in an environment where they will be more willing to access the help they need. The current VA window located in building 52 lacks the space and privacy to accomplish this. The plan clearly incorporates the ideas, thoughts and long range plans of the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, the Victor Valley College Mission and SAO's in the current Praise reports. Very little additional costs will be incurred by the college, as the current SSS Budgets (BFAP / VA / Financial Aid) will cover the continued cost.



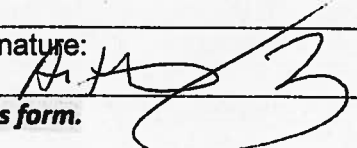
# FACILITIES REMODEL REQUEST FORM

Requested by: <u>Jason Jenkins</u>	Department: <u>Financial Aid</u>
Date submitted: <u>5/9/14</u>	Contact Number: <u>X2917</u>
Will your department fund the remodel/repair:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If <u>Yes</u> , provide the funding information: Account Number: <u>01503164802401</u>	If <u>No</u> , projects will compete for other projects for funding
Estimation of cost: M&O: <u>\$156.00</u>	I.T.? <u>#0</u>
Will the remodel cause on-going, increased expenses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Please describe in detail what you would like to have done:

*Please see attached.*

Dean/Director Approved:  Yes  No

Approving Signature: 

**If obligatory, a copy of Federal, State or County mandates must accompany this form.**

Our Veterans have programs that can help them with home purchases (VA loans).

Unfortunately many cannot afford basic home essentials like dishes, bedding, a sofa, or a dining table.



This is where **Patriots and Paws** would like to help. Providing these items will make their home complete.

You can reach us at

**714 323 PAAW (7229)**

to schedule a pickup of items to be donated.

If you can assist in any other way, please let us know.

[www.patriotsandpaws.org](http://www.patriotsandpaws.org)  
[info@patriotsandpaws.org](mailto:info@patriotsandpaws.org)

You can find us on Facebook at  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Patriots-and-Paws/283613748323930>.



Photos are actual Patriots and Paws Veteran board members serving their country.

**Your gifts to us are tax deductible!**

Federal Tax Id Number 38-3852904



## Mission Statement

To provide active Military/Veterans and their families with home furnishings. In addition, we can unite them with a rescued companion animal.



**Patriots and Paws is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.**

**Patriots and Paws...**

**We fill a gap where there is a need!**

**Please help us in**

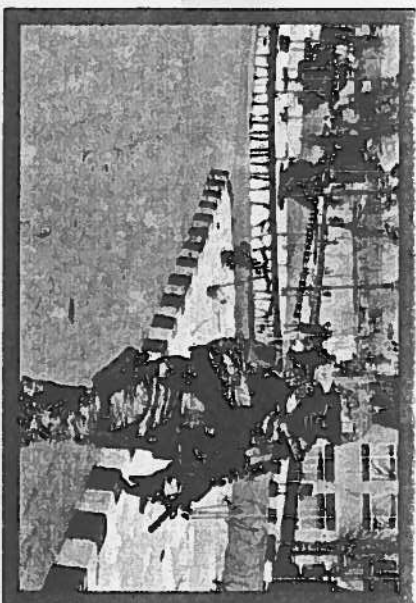
**our efforts.**

**We are in need of new or used home furnishings, appliances and kitchenware.**

- ◆ Do you know of a business with vacant warehouse space that we can put to good use?
- ◆ Does your company have extra product/inventory that can be enjoyed by our active Military/Veterans?

**We help our active**

**Military/Veterans and their families with furniture and small necessities.**



**Patriots and Paws will also**

**provide information and resources that are helpful in their return as they restart their lives back in the civilian world.**



**Our future plans include a kennel for the animals we rescue.**

**Until we open our kennel we will be rescuing animals from local shelters.**

**The animals will provide a form of companionship for the active Military/Veterans that helps relieve post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).**

**All animals will be fixed and current with their shots. Our active Military/Veterans will also receive 3 months supply of food for the animal.**



**Facilities Committee: Facility Request Rubric**

	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Educational Master Plan</b>	Information clearly relates to the Educational Master Plan. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the Educational Master Plan. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Educational Master Plan is mentioned but there are no details and/or examples provided.	Information does not speak to the Educational Master Plan.	
<b>Facilities Master Plan</b>	Information clearly relates to the Facility Master Plan. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the Facility Master Plan. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Facility Master Plan is mentioned but there are no details and/or examples provided.	Information does not speak to the Facility Master Plan.	
<b>VVC Mission</b>	Information clearly relates to the Mission. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the Mission. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	The Mission is mentioned but there are no details and/or examples provided.	Information does not speak to the Mission.	
<b>Action plan developed in PRAISE</b>	Requested project description, timeline and measurement for success are discussed in detail as part of the PRAISE preliminary action plan.	Requested project description and timeline are discussed, but does not provide measurements for success.	Only the requested project description is discussed as part of the PRAISE preliminary action plan.	Information is not included as part of the PRAISE preliminary action plan.	
<b>Provides Measurement for an SAO or SLO</b>	Information clearly details how this facility need will provide the ability to measure a program's SAO or SLO described in PRAISE.	Information clearly relates to an SAO or SLO described in PRAISE, but there is no linkage to measurement.	Information indirectly relates to an SAO or SLO described in PRAISE and there is no linkage to measurement.	Information does not speak to an SAO or SLO in PRAISE.	
<b>Startup Costs</b>	Start up costs are defined in detail including personnel, equipment, furnishings, and technology	Some costs are included but are not defined in detail.	Costs are depicted as rough estimates and do not specify type.	Start up costs are not mentioned.	
<b>Total Cost of Ownership</b>	TCO is defined in detail including personnel, equipment, supplies, technology, and ongoing maintenance	TCO is mentioned but not defined in detail or by type.	There is only mention of approximate maintenance costs.	Total cost of ownership is not mentioned.	
<b>How will project be funded?</b>	Restricted funds (grant funds are enough to cover all costs and continuing funds will support TCO)	Restricted funds (grant funds will cover start up costs but not TCO)	Restricted funds (grant will cover a percentage of start up costs but not TCO)	All monies will be paid from the general fund including start up costs and TCO.	
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b>					



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School  
Employees  
Association

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Member of the AFL-CIO

*The nation's largest  
independent classified  
employee association*

*Member of the National  
Association of Classified  
School Employees  
(NACSE), representing  
independent public  
employees throughout  
the nation*



May 9, 2014

Victor Valley Community College Facilities Committee  
18422 Bear Valley Road  
Victorville, CA 92395

Re: Veterans Resource Office

To Whom It May Concern:

CSEA membership is comprised of Brothers and Sisters from all walks of life, to include Veterans from all branches of the armed forces. In support of the Veterans who have given so much for this nation of ours we fully support the implementation of the Veteran Resource Office. In conjunction with the promise made by the California Community College Chancellor's office that issued a challenge to the community colleges to improve services to Veterans we are in full support of our Veteran students.

Sincerely,

Pearl Bandringa  
CSEA Chapter 584  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President