

VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships and the Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network

How volunteers can facilitate Veteran reentry to civilian life

The Veteran Health Administration (VHA)'s **Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network (VSPN)** initiative, led by the VHA [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships \(HAP\)](#), is based on the model of the [Department of Defense \(DOD\) sponsorship program](#). As part of this initiative, Veterans, Veteran spouses, and the community that supports Veterans and service members are volunteering as sponsors to support service members throughout their transition back into civilian communities. Keep reading to learn more about the role these sponsors play, as well as the benefits of joining this network and how it helps support service members, Veterans, and their families.

Why become a sponsor?

HAP created the VSPN initiative to leverage the power of non-monetary partnerships to help transitioning service members, Veterans, and their families access Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services and community resources, such as employment opportunities, education benefits, housing assistance, and more. Volunteering to become a sponsor for service members means making a difference by:

- Helping a service member before, during, and after transitioning into your community by keep in touch with them and helping to answer questions.
- Connecting a service member and their family to local resources that can aid in securing employment, educational and housing opportunities, such as local chapters of Veteran service organizations, County Service Officers, Vet Centers, and VA Medical Centers.



Sponsors ultimately provide peer support for Veterans and help them access quality benefits, whole health care, and services to improve experiences, well-being, and outcomes.

Who can become a sponsor?

Anyone can become a sponsor. You do not need to already be a volunteer for a community organization to become a sponsor. Prior experience in the military or with sponsorship is not required. Veterans and non-Veterans who care about service members and Veterans, and can commit the time to complete the recommended training, make great sponsors. This means Veterans, Veteran spouses, VSO members, State or Country Veterans affairs offices, VA employees, and the broader population of community volunteers are all welcome.

Benefits for service members and Veterans

- Making a positive difference in a Veteran or service member's life.
- Growing your community by strengthening connections between Veterans, neighbors, VA, and local organizations.
- Service members who have support (such as a sponsor or easy access to community resources) experience less stress and have better outcomes during the transition back into civilian communities. Early research indicates access to VHA and community resources like sponsors set Veterans up for success across social determinants of health — like employment, economic stability, education, and transportation, and reduce risk factors related to Veteran death by suicide.
- Sponsors can receive free training from VA on how to become a peer sponsor and better support Veterans and transitioning service members. Training can be accessed through Columbia University's [Columbia+ platform](#).

Responsibilities of sponsoring a Veteran

- Connect with a community partner that manages sponsors. You can find several that have partnered with VHA at va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/vspn.asp

- Communicate with the appropriate VA community partner about additional support for your paired Veteran or service requests.
- Support Veterans or service members as they identify goals and develop a Transition Action Plan to smooth reentry into civilian life.
- Share local area knowledge with paired Veteran or service member and assist with connecting to resources like VA programs and local community programs.
- Coordinate opportunities for Veteran or service members to meet others at community partner or VA-organized events.

Healthcare Advancement Initiatives led by HAP

VHA HAP's mission is to ensure **partnerships and health care advancements support Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors across social determinants of health.**



To learn more about VHA partnerships, please visit: va.gov/healthpartnerships.

Disclaimer: Sponsors are not managed by VA. Individuals who wish to become a sponsor do so by signing up as a volunteer with a non-VA organization. VA does not endorse and is not responsible for sponsors or organizations that manage sponsors. The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the linked websites, or the information, products, or services contained therein.