

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Questions in this protocol about the “program” pertain to the national service program/project that engages VMF, not about the respondent’s organization more broadly. Questions should be adjusted, as appropriate, based on information provided by the program in the grant application.

INTRODUCTION:

Hello, my name is ___ and I’m calling from Westat in Rockville, Maryland. On behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service, we are conducting research into proven and promising practices for national service programs that engage or serve veterans or military families. I’d like to talk with you about how your organization engages veterans or military families within the [PROGRAM NAME]. We’re most interested in any successes that you have had in engaging veterans or military families as beneficiaries or service participants. Is this a good time for you?

INFORMED CONSENT:

I know we discussed this when we set up the call for today, but I want to review a couple of things with you before we start. First, this is a research project and your participation is voluntary – you don’t have to answer the questions I ask and you can stop at any time. Choosing not to complete the interview will not have any effect on current or future funding for you from the Corporation.

Second, your participation in this study will be anonymous. We will not attribute any comments to you in our final report to the Corporation. They’re interested in learning what’s working well across multiple programs, not a particular program or interviewee.

Finally, to make sure we’re analyzing the most accurate data, we would like to audio record this interview. These interviews will only be available to Westat staff who are working on the project; the Corporation for National and Community Service will not have access to these recordings and the files will be destroyed once we have submitted our final report. Is that ok?

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

[TURN ON AUDIO RECORDER] Now that I have the audio recorder on, is it still ok if I record this interview?

[IF PARTICIPANT CHANGES MIND AND SAYS NO, JUST TAKE GOOD HAND-WRITTEN NOTES]

1. History

Let's start by having you tell me a little about the history of this program and the focus on veterans and military families. [IF NEEDED] How long has your organization been operating the program?

INTERVIEWER - IF YOU HAVE AN INTERMEDIARY (NATIONAL OR UMBRELLA) ORGANIZATION, YOUR INTERVIEW SHOULD ONLY COVER THE QUESTIONS IN THE BOX BELOW. IF NOT AN INTERMEDIARY, CONTINUE WITH PROBES ON NEXT PAGE.

Intermediary Organizations submit proposals to CNCS and then distribute money to individual projects or organizations that apply to the intermediary for support.

How many programs do you support that serve veterans or military families or that use veterans or military families as national service volunteers?

Would you be able to send us a list of your programs that serve veterans or military families or that recruit them as national service volunteers? [Provide your email address.]

Which one or two of these programs do you think is/are the most successful? Would you please describe the program(s) to me briefly?

Because we are most interested in talking with individual projects about their efforts relating to veterans and military families, it sounds like we should conduct a more in-depth interview with someone at [the one or two programs mentioned by R above]. May I have contact information for that/those programs? [Take the contact information.]

Thank you for your time. This has been most helpful in understanding how your organization helps support veterans and military families through the Corporation.

[End the interview]

PROBES (AS NEEDED and AS APPROPRIATE)

[IF VMF ARE SERVICE BENEFICIARIES and ORGANIZATION HAS NOT HISTORICALLY BEEN VETERAN-FOCUSED]

What led to the decision that your organization would provide services to veterans/military families?

[IF VMF ARE SERVICE BENEFICIARIES and ORGANIZATION IS NEW TO NATIONAL SERVICE (e.g., VFW Ladies Auxiliary)]

What led your organization to address the needs of veterans/military families through national service (i.e., Corporation funding)?

[IF NOT OBVIOUS (an “obvious” case would be the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill providing mental health advocacy services)]

Why did you decide to provide services around [DOMAIN – e.g., healthcare, housing, education]?

- Did your organization conduct a gap analysis or needs assessment? [IF YES] – Please tell me a bit more about that process (When was it done? Who conducted it? Findings?).

[IF VMF ARE NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANTS]

What led your organization to focus on engaging veterans/military families as national service participants?

QUESTION 2 IS ONLY FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO VMF

2. Services Offered/Population Served

I'd like to find out a little bit more about the services that you provide to veterans/military families. You said your program focuses on providing [DOMAIN] to veterans and military families. What are some **specific** examples of services that your national service participants have offered?

PROBES

- How do you determine which veterans/military families need services?
- And how do you determine which specific services to offer a veteran/military family?

- What outreach strategies have you used to reach veterans/military families? Which strategies have worked well? Explain. [IF NEEDED: What evidence do you have that demonstrates that the strategies have been effective?]
- Approximately how many of your beneficiaries are veterans or members of military families?

QUESTION 3 IS ONLY FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT RECRUIT VMF AS NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

3. VMF As National Service Participants

Now I'd like to talk about your [AS APPROPRIATE - VISTAs/AmeriCorps members/Senior Corps volunteers] who are veterans or military family members. What kinds of recruitment strategies do you use? (e.g., PSAs, newspaper ads)

PROBES

- [IF APPROPRIATE] Do you use different recruiting strategies for veterans as opposed to family members? Explain.
- Which strategies do you believe to be working well? Explain [INTERVIEWER – REM we are looking for whatever evidence the respondent may have about what's working well; some evidence may be, "I have seen the changes myself..."]
- What kinds of recruitment strategies have you used that have not been as successful? Explain.
- Are there approaches you have found effective for providing training or supports that meet needs that are specific to veterans/military families who serve as national service participants? If yes, explain.
- Approximately how many of your national service participants are veterans or members of military families?

4. Community Volunteers

Now let's talk about community volunteers. [NOTE: A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER IS A VOLUNTEER WHO IS NOT AN AMERICORPS MEMBER, VISTA OR SENIOR CORPS PERSON] How much do you focus on recruiting community volunteers? [INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONSE IS "VERY LITTLE" OR "WE DON'T," SKIP TO PROMISING PRACTICES SECTION]

How much does your organization focus on recruiting veterans or military families as community volunteers? Explain.

PROBES

- Are there specific activities for which you actively target veterans or military families as community volunteers? Tell me about these.
- What kinds of recruitment strategies do you use?
 - Do you use different strategies for veterans as opposed to military family members? Explain.
 - o What have been the most successful strategies? Explain.
 - o Which strategies have not been as successful? Explain.
- How many of your community volunteers are veterans/military family members?

5. Respondent Assessment of Program

Overall, what do you believe to be the **most successful** aspects of your program for involving veterans/military families in national service?

What, if anything, **would you change**? Why? [AS NEEDED] What specific changes would you make?

[IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED] **What data have you collected** on the effectiveness of your program, particularly related to meeting the needs of veterans/military families through national service?

[IF NOT CLEAR]

- Do you have data showing the numbers of veterans/military families served or the number of services provided? [outputs]
- [IF VMF ARE BENEFICIARIES] Do you have data that show how the veteran/military family beneficiaries have changed as a result of the services? [outcomes]
- [IF VMF ARE NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANTS] Do you have data that show how veterans/military families have changed as a result of serving as national service participants?
- Do you have data that show that veterans/military families who receive services through your program/project are doing better than veterans/military families who have not received your services? [impacts]

[IF R HAS DATA] What have the data shown?

6. Promising Practices

Earlier you had mentioned [BRIEFLY RECOUNT HISTORY OF PROGRAM]

[THEN, AS APPROPRIATE]

You had **mentioned that your program was modeled** after [NAME OF OTHER PROGRAM]. What was it about that [OTHER PROGRAM] that was compelling to your organization?

OR

Did you model your program/project after another program or project you had heard about? [IF YES] What was it about that [OTHER PROGRAM] that was compelling to your organization?

PROBES

- Did you modify the approach in any way or implement it as originally developed? Explain.
- Do you know if that program had been evaluated or if any evidence was collected to demonstrate its effectiveness? IF YES, ASK R FOR DESCRIPTION OR REFERENCES TO PROGRAM EVALUATION.

7. Evaluation

Do you know if you ever had an **evaluation done on your program**? [IF R HAS ALREADY REFERENCED THE EVALUATION IN ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS, ADJUST WORDING]

[IF YES] Please tell me about that evaluation. [IF NEEDED: Who conducted it? What were the evaluation questions? What was the evaluation design?]

PROBES

- Was the impact of national service part of the evaluation? If so, explain.
- Did the evaluation explore the impact in the community? If so, what were the findings?
- Did they assess the impact of participation on veterans/military families? If so, what impact was found?
- How have you used the findings to improve the program?
- Is there a published report that we can access? [GET ACCESS INFORMATION FROM R]

[IF NO:] Do you have plans to have your program evaluated? If so, describe.

8. Unique Contributions of National Service

Now I would like to turn the conversation to the unique contributions of National Service to meeting the needs of veterans and military families.

[INTERVIEWER – SELECT APPROPRIATE PHRASING OF QUESTION]

[IF EXISTING VMF PROGRAM AND ADDED NATIONAL SERVICE] How has national service contributed to your organization's ability to meet the needs of veterans/military families? Thinking about other organizations in your community that serve this population, what unique niche does national service fill?

OR

[IF ALREADY HAD NATIONAL SERVICE AND STARTED WORKING WITH VMF] – What do you think are the unique contributions national service is making in addressing the needs of veterans/military families? [AS NEEDED: How is your program different from other organizations in your community that are serving veterans and military families?]

[FOLLOW-UP QUESTION FOR BOTH TYPES OF PROGRAMS; IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED BY R] Do you have **outcome or impact evidence** that demonstrates the unique value of national service to your program?

9. Technical Assistance

Are there particular tools or technical assistance that the Corporation might provide that would better assist your efforts to involve veterans and/or military families in your program/project? Please explain.

Those are all of the questions that I have. If you would like to send us written materials or references, you can email them to me at [email address] or to cindyrubenstein@westat.com. We will be analyzing the information gathered through our interviews and will produce a learning document that should be available at the end of the year. Thank you for your time!