

# Walk-in Centers and Services for Veterans

## Recommendations to the Utah State Board of Regents

### September 26, 2014

#### Introduction

Institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education are committed to serving veterans and helping them succeed in achieving their post-secondary educational goals. Assisting veterans is an important element to support the Regents' goal for 66% of Utah adults to possess a college certificate or degree by the year 2020. Additionally, specialized service to veterans provides recognition for the sacrifices and contributions veterans have made to society.

Earlier this year, the Utah State Legislature passed Senate Bill 68, Veterans Centers. This legislation required the Board of Regents to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of providing a veterans' "walk-in center or services at each institution of higher education." Working with the Chief Student Services Officers at each institution, Commissioner's staff members developed a survey document that was distributed to the institutions. Results of this survey became the basis of this feasibility study report.

Survey results provided detailed information regarding the levels of service provided to veterans, specific services provided to veterans, identification of gaps in service, criteria to assess levels of service, criteria to assess when a walk-in veterans center would be appropriate for an institution to provide, estimated costs associated with service enhancement based on a system-wide standard, and estimated costs to implement new walk-in veterans centers where such centers do not currently exist.

#### Criteria to Determine Levels of Service to Veterans Including Walk-in Veterans Centers

While all institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) are responsive in providing services for veterans, the services provided vary from one institution to another. In assessing services it was helpful to consider services by level. In doing so, the following definitions were used:

**Level 1- Veterans Support Staff-** Institution assigns full-time staff member(s) responsibility to provide services to veterans. These staff members have other responsibilities assigned to them outside their responsibilities to veterans.

**Level 2- Dedicated Veterans Support Office-** Institution has at least one position assigned to provide services to veterans on a full-time basis.

**Level 3- Veterans Services Center-** Institution has at least one position assigned to provide services to veterans on a full-time basis and offers expanded services for veterans that serve a variety of veteran needs.

**Level 4-Veterans Services with Walk-in Veterans Center-** Institution has at least one position assigned to provide services to veterans on a full-time basis, offers expanded services for veterans that serve a

variety of veteran needs, and provides dedicated space for use by veterans. A walk-in veterans' center typically requires additional space and expanded staffing beyond Level 3 services.

Respondents were asked to assess the level at which their institutions provide services to veterans. They were also asked to specify a range of veteran enrollment they believed was reasonable to justify providing each level of service identified above. From this information, it is recommended that the following criteria guide institutions in determining the level of service provided to veterans.

Level 1- Less than 50 enrolled veterans

Level 2- 50 – 249 enrolled veterans

Level 3- 250 – 449 enrolled veterans

Level 4- 450 or more enrolled veterans

Utilizing these criteria, two institutions would need to increase the service level currently provided. Specifically, Southern Utah University would increase from level 1 to level 4, and Utah Valley University would increase from level 2 to level 4. See Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Current and Recommended Service Levels for Veterans**

Institution	Estimated Veterans Enrolled Fall 2013	Current Self-identified Service Level	Recommended Service Level Based on Proposed Criteria
University of Utah	915	4	4
Utah State University	525	4	4
Weber State University	913	4	4
Southern Utah University	450	1	4
Snow College	46	1	1
Dixie State University	209	2	2
Utah Valley University	900	2	4
Salt Lake Community College	1300	4	4

### Services for Veterans

Respondents were asked to identify the services their institutions provide to veterans. These services were derived from conversations and feedback from USHE institutional personnel who work with veterans, conversations with executive officers of the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs, members of the Utah Legislative Veterans Reintegration Task Force (now known as the Veterans' and Military Affairs Commission), personnel on the Utah Veterans Education and Training Working Group, and through information gathered from national bodies including the American Council on Education and the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges.

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the services institutions indicated they were currently providing at the time the survey was completed, which services could be provided without additional costs, which

services could be provided with additional funding, and in a few cases which services would not be feasible to provide even if additional funding were available. Notwithstanding the general service levels described above, survey results showed that to varying degrees all institutions would need to increase services to veterans in order to offer all services within an institution's recommended service level. It is recommended that an institution would provide a substantive portion of the services under a given service level to be considered functioning at that level. It is recommended that the following service items be associated with the respective service levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 and that appropriate funding be allocated by the legislature to enable the institutions to function at the recommended service levels so indicated in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 2. Recommended Services for Veterans by Service Level and Institutions**

**Level 1 - Recommended to be provided by all institutions**

	UU	USU	WSU	SUU	Snow	DSU	UVU	SLCC
<b>Advocate for veterans with campus entities and personnel</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Award credit to veterans for learning demonstrated through prior military experience and training in accordance with Utah Code 53B-15-107</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Commit to practice the principles of excellence est. by Executive Order 13607- Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Facilitate certification of United States Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Include statement of veterans preference in institutional employee recruitment and hiring documents</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Provide guidance to help veterans complete the application for United States Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Provide guidance to help veterans obtain Utah residency status to qualify for in-state tuition</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Support attendance at annual in-state ELR/SAA training for veterans school certifying officials</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Commit to practice the criteria established by the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Consortium</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost
<b>Defer tuition or billing until veteran educational funds are available</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w Cost
<b>Provide guidance to support veterans with admission into educational programs at the institution</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w Cost
<b>Work with veterans and academic personnel to assist in resolving enrollment and program entry requirement issues</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Utilize the resources available in the American Council on Education's Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions</b>	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Develop tracking system to identify all enrolled veterans each semester including those using VA benefits and those not using VA benefits</b>	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Add w Cost	Add w Cost	Add w Cost	Add w Cost	Add w Cost

**Level 2 - Recommended to be provided by U of U, USU, WSU, SUU, DSU, UVU, and SLCC**  
 Service items included in Level 1 above plus the following:

	UU	USU	WSU	SUU	DSU	SLCC	UVU	Snow
<b>Participate in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs work study program</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Not Feasible
<b>Establish an office that serves as a central point of service for veterans</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Provide orientation services for veterans who have been recently admitted to the institution</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Support professional development of veterans service personnel at annual out-of-state meetings such as WAVES or NAVPA</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Not Feasible	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Contact enrolled veterans each semester and invite them to take advantage of services available to them</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w Cost
<b>Establish a standing committee composed of academic and student services personnel to discuss common veterans' issues and make recommendations to appropriate individuals and groups for improvement</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w Cost	Currently Provided
<b>Upon admission identify and contact veterans to make them aware of veterans services at the institution</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Not Feasible	Currently Provided	Add w Cost

**Level 3 - Recommended to be provided by U of U, USU, WSU, SUU, UVU, and SLCC**  
 Service items included in Levels 1 and 2 above plus the following:

	UU	USU	WSU	SUU	DSU	SLCC	UVU	Snow
<b>Provide a formal process for veterans issues to be represented or heard within student government or student body organizations</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Assist veterans to transition from school to the workplace</b>	Currently Provided	Not Feasible	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Add w Cost
<b>Contact enrolled veterans each semester to assist them with retention and completion</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Not Feasible	Currently Provided	Currently Provided
<b>Develop and implement outreach training and/or materials designed to help members of the campus community better understand needs and issues of veterans</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Not Feasible	Currently Provided
<b>Provide an academic outreach program to help underprepared veterans achieve success in college courses</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Not Feasible	Currently Provided

**Level 4 - Recommended to be provided by U of U, USU, WSU, SUU, UVU, and SLCC**  
 Service items included in Levels 1, 2, and 3 above plus the following:

	UU	USU	WSU	SLCC	SUU	DSU	UVU	Snow
<b>Provide a walk-in center for veterans</b>	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Add w/o Cost	Currently Provided	Currently Provided	Not Feasible

## Estimated Costs

Detailed cost information is shown in the tables below. Cost information reflects salaries and benefits that are in addition to Veterans Administration work-study funds. Tables 3 and 4 reflect costs associated with increasing services to veterans consistent with each institution's recommended service level. Tables 4 and 5 reflect costs associated with establishing walk-in veterans centers where such centers do not yet exist. Table 7 provides summary cost data.

Table 3. One-time Costs: Enhancement of services for veterans and increase in service levels

Cost Item	U of U	USU	WSU	SUU	Snow	DSU	UVU	SLCC	USHE Total
Acquisition of Space		5,000							5,000
Remodeling		5,000							5,000
Furnishings		20,000			2,000				22,000
Full-time Salaries		36,650							36,650
Full-time Benefits		16,126							16,126
Part-time staff wages beyond veterans work-study positions									
Part-time staff benefits beyond veterans work-study positions									
Operations and Maintenance									
Current Expense		2,000							2,000
Travel, out-of-state		5,500							5,500
Travel, in-state		1,200							1,200
Other costs (specify) SUU- Marketing publications, Veteran Orientation, On-line tracking questionnaire				13,000					13,000
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>91,476</b>		<b>13,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>				<b>106,476</b>

Table 4. On-going Costs: Enhancement of services for veterans and increase in service levels

Cost Item	U of U	USU	WSU	SUU	Snow	DSU	UVU	SLCC***	USHE Total
Acquisition of Space									0
Remodeling									0
Furnishings									0
Full-time Salaries	80,000	73,300	32,000		40,000			84,000	309,300
Full-time Benefits	32,000	32,252	13,760		25,000			40,000	143,012
Part-time staff wages beyond veterans work-study positions		7,500	15,000		3,600				26,100
Part-time staff benefits beyond veterans work-study positions		3,000	1,238		350				4,588
Operations and Maintenance			5,000						6,500
Current Expense		1,500	7,000		3,000				10,000
Travel, out-of-state		5,500	10,000		700		3,200		19,400
Travel, in-state		1,200			300				1,500
Other costs (specify) DSU-tutoring/counseling; SUU-Marketing publications, veteran orientation, student mentors				30,350		2,400			32,750
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>112,000</b>	<b>124,252</b>	<b>83,998</b>	<b>30,350</b>	<b>72,950</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>124,000</b>	<b>553,150</b>

Table 5. One-time Costs: Walk-in veterans center

Cost Item	U of U	USU	WSU	SUU**	Snow**	DSU**	UVU	SLCC***	USHE Total
Acquisition of Space									0

Remodeling				1,800		9,000	24,000		34,800
Furnishings				11,000		5,000	6,000		22,000
Full-time Salaries*									0
Full-time Benefits*									0
Part-time staff wages beyond veterans work-study positions									0
Part-time staff benefits beyond veterans work-study positions									0
Operations and Maintenance									0
Current Expense				8,000			13,164		21,164
Travel, out-of-state									0
Travel, in-state									0
Other costs (specify)									0
<b>Total Costs</b>				<b>20,800</b>		<b>14,000</b>	<b>43,164</b>		<b>77,964</b>

Table 6. On-going Costs: Walk-in veterans center

Cost Item	U of U	USU	WSU	SUU	Snow**	DSU**	UVU	SLCC***	USHE Total
Acquisition of Space						12,000			12,000
Remodeling									0
Furnishings									0
Full-time Salaries*				35,500			38,580	38,211	112,291
Full-time Benefits*				14,910			26,379	26,000	67,289
Part-time staff wages beyond veterans work-study positions				16,320		30,000	20,680		67,000
Part-time staff benefits beyond veterans work-study positions							2,225		2,225
Operations and Maintenance						9,000			9,000
Current Expense				7,700			20,000		27,700
Travel, out-of-state				2,500		2,000			4,500
Travel, in-state				1,500		1,000			2,500
Other costs (specify) DSU-technology, wiring, computers/phone						7,000			7,000
<b>Total Costs</b>				<b>78,430</b>		<b>61,000</b>	<b>107,864</b>	<b>64,211</b>	<b>311,505</b>

\*Includes costs only when a full-time person is not currently employed who could oversee the day-to-day operations of the walk-in veterans center.

\*\*Recommendation for DSU is service-level 2. A walk-in center for DSU is optional. Due to Snow college's veteran enrollment, a walk-in center is not recommended.

\*\*Salt Lake Community College has operated a high-level walk-in veterans center since 2008 and reported that it would not need additional funding to bring its level of service to meet all service items identified in the survey. Nonetheless, SLCC identified a number of ways in which its service to some 1,300 veterans could be strengthened across its campuses and seeks funding to achieve this objective.

- One full-time academic/persistence/outreach advisor to work with veterans at all campuses
- One full-time specialist/technician/school certifying official for the South City Campus

- One full-time secretary/administrative assistant at the Taylorsville Redwood Campus

Institutions would receive the following total funding to meet the service levels set forth in this document.

**Table 7. Total Funding Needed**

Funding Category	U of U	USU	WSU	SUU	Snow	DSU	UVU	SLCC	USHE Total
One-time	0	91,476	0	33,800	2,000	14,000	43,164	0	184,440
On-going	112,000	124,252	83,998	108,780	72,950	63,400	111,064	188,211	864,655

Consistent with requirements made in Senate Bill 68, it is recommended that the Board of Regents acknowledge the costs above that would need to be allocated by the legislature during the 2015 session in order to fund the increase in services to veterans as outlined in this report.

### Follow-up Reporting to the Board of Regents

Contingent upon legislative funding, at the end of the 2015-2016 fiscal year, institutions shall report progress toward implementing the service gaps identified in this report.

Additionally, it is recommended that each USHE institution provide an annual report to the Board of Regents. This report will cover the most recently completed fiscal year and would be due September 30. The report should contain the following information:

1. Number of veterans enrolled each semester at the institution who used veterans administration educational benefits
2. Number of enrolled veterans who utilized services of the institution's veterans support office each semester
3. Credits awarded to veterans for previous military service and training
  - a. Number of veterans awarded credit for previous military service and training
  - b. Total credits awarded to veterans for previous military service and training

### Summary of Recommendations

Based on requirements set forth in Senate Bill 68 and from information obtained from institutions for this feasibility study, it is recommended that the Board of Regents:

1. Accept the criteria specified in this feasibility study that will guide institutions in the levels of service provided to veterans including services associated under each service level as described in Table 2 of this report.

2. Acknowledge the appropriate funding that would need to be allocated by the legislature to enable the institutions to function at the recommended service levels indicated in this report. Total funding includes \$184,440 of one-time funds and \$864,655 of on-going funds.
3. Request that institutions provide an annual report to the Board of Regents that will provide summary information of veterans served as specified in this report.
4. Request that each institution within the Utah System of Higher Education establish a notification process regarding the institution's walk-in veterans' center or services when students apply for admission.