



## VRSC Funding Request Form FY2025

**Department:**

Veteran Resource & Support Center

**Program, Service or Operation Requested:**

Position Reclassification (Assistant Director to Associate Director)

**General Description:**

The VRSC uses career ladders to maintain a high-quality team of student affairs professionals. Taking care of our staff is vital to long-term success of the department and our students. This request is for a staff member who has qualified and is overdue for a career ladder advancement through excellence, leadership, and selflessly volunteering to assume additional responsibilities.

**Request Type:**

Full       Increase       One-Time       Partial/Matching

**Type of Funds Requested:**

UAF       Other

**General Questions**

***How does this address an important need and/or positively impact students?***

In the past 11 years, student veteran enrollment has more than doubled and we expect another enrollment surge over the next few years. As a result, the VRSC has significantly increased programming and outreach with a much larger and dynamic staff. The VRSC now houses staff from 8 separate campus and external entities to provide a full range of “application to vocation” support that maximizes the leadership potential of over 1,150 student veterans for future service to our state, nation, and world. The VRSC Assistant Director is a critical position in providing support for a unique student support model.

This position creates continuous student impact through detailed planning and leadership to create program synergies that enhance student success. Position responsibilities have significantly increased in the financial area (scholarship awarding, student assistance funding, and childcare support). Retaining talented staff who understand student veterans, our programs, and evidence-based practices is the key to creating even more efficiencies that ensures Texas A&M remains the “Destination of Choice” for student veteran success.

***What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?***

Retaining the Assistant Director is vital in the accomplishment of all the VRSC Strategic Goals. Each of these goals has specific strategies, tactics, and timelines that rely on increased/improved campus partnerships, assessment, and communication. Maintaining experience in this position is critical to accomplishing and enhancing the VRSC “resource & support” mission! As a reclassified position with greater responsibility and experience, this position will also significantly contribute to all the DSA Strategic Goals and the university mission.

**Please provide data, evidence, and/or input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.**

The chart below highlights the growth of the VRSC in terms of:

- Campus and external entities that are housed in the VRSC.
- Full time staff, Grad Assistants and Student Workers housed or employed in the VRSC.

As the VRSC grew, a previous SAFAB Board approved the addition of a Program Coordinator in 2015. This staff member was reclassified in 2017 for two reasons; first, to align the position with the increased responsibility and second, in response to an external agency attempting to hire the individual at a greater salary. Since this previous reclassification (6 years), the VRSC has nearly doubled in terms of staff and programming. The requirements of this position have increased significantly to manage this growth in day-to-day operations.

	<b>Program Coordinator</b>	<b>Ass't Director</b>	<b>Associate Director??</b>
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b># Entities Supported/Housed in the VRSC</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Full Time Staff Housed in the VRSC</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>GA's/PT Staff Working in the VRSC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Student Workers Employed by the VRSC</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>45</b>

Another example of the increased responsibilities of this position is reflected by the increased student assistance program (SAVE and SAVE – SP) requirements. In 2017, this position was only required to process about one request per month. So far this calendar year, there is a requirement to interview, process, and follow-up on an average of one request per week! In the first 8 months of this year, the Assistant Director has assisted nearly 40 student veterans and awarded over \$57,000. The impact that this position creates is evidenced by the student success rate; to date, of the 130 students who have received a SAVE or SAVE-SP award, all but one has graduated or remain enrolled – A 99% success rate!

**What actions have you implemented or discontinued internally to address the identified need?**

The VRSC continually mitigates increased demands caused by student growth to maximize resources; the Assistant Director position is critical in creating these efficiencies. Here are a few examples of actions taken by the VRSC to maximize resources:

- Realigned and streamlined existing programs to decrease full-time staff task load.
- Discontinued the partnership with the University of Michigan for the Peer Advising Program (PAVE); replaced it with a partnership with the Academic Success Center to create the Veteran Aggie Leaders for Outreach Research and Resources (VALOR2) Program to reduce reporting requirements and eliminate funding requirements.
- Discontinued/Realigned the Military Order of the Purple Heart & Wounded Warrior Awareness Program
- Reason: While TAMU will retain the “Purple Heart” University designation, the staff resources previously required to maintain this relationship are no longer cost effective (i.e., too many staff hours to support too few students).
- Discontinued/Realigned the VetConnect Program – Reason: Lack of staff hours to adequately support

“high overhead” coordination.

- Hired additional VA Work Study (funded by the VA) student workers and increased their responsibilities.
- Transitioned the Aggie Veteran Network from version 2.0 to 3.0 using a LinkedIn platform to significantly reduce staff task load and eliminate the requirement for an additional full-time staff member.
- Assumed the TAMU System veteran services mission. Hired additional staff using TAMUS funds and leveraged this staff member to assist with external campus engagement.
- Increased collaboration with campus/community partners to create new efficiencies.
- Eliminated the Warrior Scholar Project and Service 2 School to increase student impact and increase donor ROI.

The VRSC Assistant Director’s leadership is critical to making these programmatic changes to maximize resources. However, in a small department that is no longer growing and with little staff turnover, advancement opportunities are limited. Reclassifications are the only opportunity for advancement, and they must be available when they are earned.

***If funding is granted, what metrics will you use to evaluate success of this program/service/operation?***

The most direct measure of success for this reclassification will be that the VRSC will continue to maximize efficiencies through experienced assessment and WILL NOT request any additional full time DSA funded staff in the foreseeable future. The success of this Associate Director position will also be measured against the VRSC Strategic Plan Goal #3 – “Refine, Document, and recognize collaborative processes that accomplish departmental goals, ensure completion of individual tasks, and maximize professional development of all staff housed in the VRSC.”

***Have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered?***

***Please explain.***

YES! The long-term goal is to support several VRSC positions (possibly this reclassified position) and future programming growth through future endowment funding. While recent development efforts have been very successful, endowment funding for staff positions will take longer as we bridge the near-term funding gaps.

VRSC reserves are not an option. Given current funding and growth, the VRSC reserves cannot keep up with the minimum balance requirements in the post-COVID environment.

**Total Estimated Cost**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Position Reclassification to Associate Director	\$7,100
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
<b>TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED</b>	\$7,100

**THANK YOU for your careful consideration of this request!**