



WA State Department of Veterans Affairs  
Counseling and Wellness Programs  
Veterans Conservation Corps  
Internship Program



*"In healing nature, you heal yourself."  
-John Beal, Founder of the VCC*

### **VCC Program Mission**

**Serve those who served by providing veterans with self-directed connections to the lands, waters, and communities in WA State.**

The VCC provides opportunities for veterans to do meaningful work in conserving and restoring natural ecosystems with our environmental conservation and agricultural community partner organizations. We support veterans in establishing and maintaining healthy reciprocal relationships with nature and their community so that through their own efforts they may increase their self-efficacy and resiliency and realize a positive shift in their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. To further support their efforts, VCC interns receive training and resources on veteran-related topics that empower them to address and overcome any challenges that they may experience in their transition from the military.

### **Desired Outcomes for VCC Interns**

- Veterans take the initiative to create a self-directed internship experience
- Given the opportunity to do meaningful work in conserving and restoring natural ecosystems and seeing the results of their efforts, veterans acknowledge and understand their own self-efficacy, resiliency, and ability to overcome their own personal challenges
- Veterans establish and maintain healthy reciprocal relationships with nature and their community
- Veterans realize a positive shift in their mental, emotional, and physical well-being
- Veterans acquire skills and experiences that may help them in finding meaningful employment

### **VCC Program Responsibilities**

- Prior to Internship Start:
  - Complete and submit all required documentation to WDVA Contracts Office to initiate and finalize internship program contract between WDVA and partner organization
  - Finalize internship position descriptions and advertise to VCC networks
  - Recruitment of internship applicants and selection of applicants for interviews
  - Coordinate and conduct first round of applicant interviews
  - Conduct background and reference checks on potential interns
  - Inform interns of acceptance into internship
  - Conduct VCC intern orientation
  - Ensure VCC administrative/hiring paperwork is complete prior to internship start date
  - Conduct veteran cultural engagement training with partner organization staff

- During Internship:
  - Provide intern support and assistance in resolving any intern issues/concerns
  - Connect interns to veteran resources and benefits
  - Coordinate training and professional/personal development opportunities for interns
  - Conduct internship mid-term evaluation with intern and partner organization staff
  
- At Completion of Internship:
  - Conduct internship final evaluation with intern and partner organization staff
  - Ensure intern completion of end of internship surveys and final report

### **Partner Organization Responsibilities**

- Prior to Internship Start:
  - Collaborate with VCC Program to draft an internship position description
  - Collaborate with VCC Program to create and finalize a contract with WDVA
  - Advertise final internship position description to partner organization's networks
  - Coordinate with VCC Program to conduct second round of intern applicant interviews
  - Select intern applicant for internship after second interviews are complete and inform VCC Program of intern selection
  - Conduct internal organization orientation for the VCC intern as applicable
  - Ensure internal organization administration applicable to hiring the VCC intern is complete prior to internship start date
  - Ensure all staff who will interact with the VCC intern will participate in a veteran cultural engagement training hosted by WDVA's Veterans Training Support Center
  
- During Internship:
  - Provide opportunities for meaningful work that encourages intern self-efficacy and motivates interns to learn and experience as much as possible about the partner organization's mission and work
  - Provide professional mentorship, training, and/or networking opportunities if requested by intern
  - Provide a flexible work schedule, within reason, that allows interns the time and space to address any personal issues if necessary
  - Assist in resolving any immediate intern issues/concerns within scope of daily work
  - Maintain communications with VCC Program regarding any intern issues that require WDVA support and/or veteran resources
  - Ensure intern has proper equipment and safety gear to participate in internship duties
  
- At Completion of Internship:
  - Submit to VCC Program a summary report of intern accomplishments

## **VCC Intern Responsibilities**

- Prior to Internship Start:
  - Submit to the VCC Program all documentation and information required to enroll in the VCC Internship Program
  
- During Internship:
  - Adhere to expectations/requirements of internship position description
  - Remain in direct communication with site supervisor and VCC Program
  - Attend and actively engage in all required VCC and host organization trainings
  - Be proactive in seeking professional and/or personal development opportunities
  - Focus on personal growth and experiencing opportunities unique to the internship
  - Focus on personal connection with the lands, waters, and communities in WA State
  
- At Completion of Internship:
  - Complete end of internship surveys and final internship report

## **Intern Check-Ins with VCC Program**

- Standard for All Interns:
  - VCC Orientation
  - Midterm Review
  - Final Review
  
- Need-based:
  - When mediation is required beyond interactions between intern and partner organization staff for any issues that may arise during internship
  - To provide resources as requested by intern (professional/personal development, veterans benefits and resources, etc.)
  - Check-ins requested by intern for accountability in achieving goals established at orientation

## **Intern Training**

- Required:
  - VCC Orientation
  - Veteran Cultural Engagement Training
  - Suicide Awareness & Prevention Training
  - Veteran Peer Support Training
  - VCC Annual Training (every August)
  
- Optional:
  - Financial Literacy Training
  - Resume/cover letter/job interviewing
  - Posttraumatic Growth Training
  - Dependable Strengths Workshop
  - Environmental conservation conferences/symposiums/workshops
  - Business Planning Workshop
  - Whole Farm Planning and Agricultural Entrepreneurship Courses
  - Other trainings/certifications as available and desired by intern

## **Internship Stipend**

The VCC provides interns a stipend to assist with necessary living expenses incurred while participating in the internship program. This stipend is paid directly to the intern from the WA State Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Full-time internship (~40 hours/week): \$2,400/month
- Part-time internship (~20 hours/week): \$1,200/month

## **Partner Organization Participation Fee**

The VCC will invoice a participation fee to the partner organization for each VCC internship.

	<b>Length of Internship Term</b>			
	3 Months	4 to 6 Months	7 to 9 Months	10 to 12 Months
Full-time	\$250	\$500	\$750	\$1,000
Part-time	\$125	\$250	\$375	\$500

## **Internship Term Limit**

- Each intern may complete a maximum total of 24 internship months
  - Internship terms do not need to be consecutive
  - Interns may participate in internships with different partner organizations
  - Internships may be extended beyond original term length, as long as the extension does not exceed the intern's maximum total of 24 internship months

## Contracting & Intern Enrollment Timeline

Events/Deliverables	Responsible Personnel
Partnership contract template and intern position description template emailed to Partner Organization (PO) staff for review and edit	VCC Program
Internship position description emailed to VCC Program for review and edit	PO Staff
Contract documents and internship position description submitted to WDVA Contracts Department for review and processing	VCC Program
Contract emailed to PO Staff for review, edits as applicable, and approval	WDVA Contracts Department
Return via email the signed and approved contract to WDVA Contracts Department	PO Staff
Final approved contract emailed to VCC Program Manager and PO Staff for records keeping	WDVA Contracts Department
Advertise internship position description to internal/external networks, social media platforms, etc. for recruitment	VCC Program and PO Staff
Email correspondence with intern applicants to answer questions/address any issues regarding internship and internship application process	VCC Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and conduct first round of intern applicant interviews</li> <li>• Email each applicant's resume, cover letter, and 1<sup>st</sup> interview notes to PO Staff for review</li> </ul>	VCC Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review first round internship applications</li> <li>• Select intern applicants for second round interviews and inform VCC Program of selections</li> </ul>	PO Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and facilitate second round of interviews with PO Staff and selected intern applicants</li> </ul>	VCC Program
After interview process is complete, select intern applicant for enrollment into VCC Program and communicate selection to VCC Program	PO Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct background check for selected intern</li> <li>• Conduct reference check for selected intern</li> <li>• Consult with PO Staff regarding results of background and reference checks as applicable</li> </ul>	VCC Program
After successful completion of background and reference checks, intern will be notified of selection for enrollment into VCC Internship Program	VCC Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran Cultural Engagement training conducted for PO staff</li> <li>• VCC Orientation with intern (includes completion of HR/Payroll paperwork and initial VCC Program surveys)</li> </ul>	VCC Program
First Day of Internship	Intern and PO staff

## **VCC Staff**

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## **VCC Headquarters**

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## **VCC Websites**

[www.dva.wa.gov/internships](http://www.dva.wa.gov/internships)

[www.facebook.com/VeteransConservationCorps](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransConservationCorps)

[www.instagram.com/VeteransConservationCorps](https://www.instagram.com/VeteransConservationCorps)