



SPONSORSHIP



Community Integration Coordinator Toolkit

Welcome to the ETS Sponsorship Program (ETS-SP)! We are happy to have you join our team!

Community Integration Coordinators serve as the connector between the ETS-SP and the local community. Your willingness to partner with the ETS-SP and serve as the boots on the ground for our program will maximize our ability to effectively serve our transitioning service members and Veterans.

This toolkit provides an overview of our program as well as the specific role of our Community Integration Coordinators. If you have any questions about any of the material presented, please contact us at ETS-SP National.

Again, thank you for your time and willingness to serve as a Community Integration Coordinator. We look forward to moving forward with you!

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I. Overview

A Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) is an individual or organization that leads the efforts in the community to connect the service member/Veteran and sponsor to available community resources. Every community is different. Many communities will have Veterans Administration (VA), numerous Veteran Service Organizations, a Veteran Service Officer and other entities that exist to support transitioning service members/Veterans. These organizations, pooled together by the **Community Integration Coordinator (CIC)**, are referred to as the *Community Collaborative* because they are, ideally, all collaborating together to serve the Veterans in the community.

The Community Integration Coordinator has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the ETS-SP to assume responsibility for the sponsor-Veteran relationship in their community. By agreeing to serve as the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator, he or she will lead the efforts in the community to connect the Veteran/sponsor to the various Veteran support agencies. Additionally, the ETS-SP will supply the ETS-SP CIC with access to the digital information set on the incoming Veteran. The ETS-SP CIC will know who is coming and what their needs are before they arrive on the ground in the community. This enables our communities to best serve both the incoming Veteran and community.

II. Getting Started

New Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) Implementation Checklist

The checklist found in the Resources section (VIII) of this toolkit contains primary activities with multiple tasks within each activity. All steps should be completed within one to two months prior to implementation.

Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) Task Timeline

A task timeline of daily and monthly tasks involved in administering a CIC program is found in the Resources section (VIII).

Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) Certification Checklist

The certification checklist of tasks outlines the requirements for completion of the Community Profile Map and Community Assessment in preparation for a formal evaluation and certification by America's Warrior Partnership.

Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) Certification Training and Certification

The CIC certification training consists of four-blocks of instructions and takes approximately eight hours to complete. The training is a combination of on-demand and virtual training. Training focuses on gap areas identified by the completed Community Profile Map and Community Assessment. The official CIC Certification consists of assessments, evaluation and training completion. Certification is valid for one year with the requirement for re-evaluation for the immediate four years following the initial certification. A certification seal will be provided to the newly certified organization to place on their website.

III. Recruit and Maintain a Local Sponsor Corps

A. Recruitment

Consider Sponsor Motivation. The programs that are most successful are those that identify their potential sponsors' motivations and goals and speak to them directly during their recruitment.

Employ Broad Communication. Create and announce web-based and paper-based materials specific to the program. Provide details, background, and descriptions of next steps for interested participants. Set up open house-type events, in-person meetings, conference calls, and webinars. Feature enthusiastic endorsements by sponsors who are willing to share their positive experiences and listen to and learn from those who have not had positive experiences. Connect with professional groups as well as social networks. Consider including professional associations and connect with these groups. Consider utilizing online recruiting on social media websites.

Utilize Direct Appeal. The majority of sponsors become involved because they have been invited to do so. Others become involved due to their association with a group or organization that is already engaged. Word-of-mouth is a common and successful recruitment method. A direct appeal for help, especially from a peer or social group, is often the best way to invite sponsors. Select highly regarded individuals to successfully engage, either individually or in a group setting, to encourage the recruitment of potential sponsors.

Sponsor recruitment is part of everything the program does. Not all recruitment happens within the context of a plan. Sponsor recruitment occurs during casual conversations, at formal meetings, or at official events. An invitation to be a sponsor may be extended anytime, anywhere. Every time we--or any of our sponsors, service members/Veterans, or supporters--interact with a program participant or a potential sponsor--whether through an announcement, a marketing campaign, or a personal conversation--we leave an impression about ETS-SP. Our goal is to leave a positive impression--one that encourages participation and belonging.

B. Certification

When the potential sponsor signs up at the ETS-SP website, ETS-SP National will send an email to the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator. The email will contain personal information about the sponsor, as well as his or her contact information. The ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator is encouraged to reach out to the sponsor as soon as possible and welcome him or her to the team. The sponsor will be waiting to hear from the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator and will be anxious to start the training.

ETS-SP National will conduct all three training sessions virtually for all sponsors, sponsored by the Veterans Administration (VA) with a cohort group. Each session is 2.5 hours long, totaling 7.5 hours. This ensures that our ETS-SP sponsors are trained to meet national standards and our training is consistent across the communities we serve. Within Community Collaboratives that possess trained mentors, sponsors or peer specialists, it may be possible for adjustment to training requirements, as approved by the VA office that provides the ETS sponsorship training.

Upon completion of the training and certification, sponsors will participate in continuing education requirements to ensure they keep abreast of the most current research and techniques to assist our Veterans. These one- hour classes are conducted virtually, the third Tuesday of every month, and will feature presentations on relevant topics and the domain areas. Sponsors are required to participate in at least one quarterly class, though monthly participation is encouraged.

The ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator is responsible for tracking the progress of the sponsors in your community on your community dashboard. If you have any questions or issues with your dashboard, contact ETS-SP National. When the sponsor has completed the training, he or she will be officially certified and ready to work with a service member/Veteran and will also have access to a limited sponsor dashboard.

C. Reward and Retain

The techniques listed below are best practices that enhance retaining the best sponsor corps.

Communicate!

Make sure your sponsors realize how important they are. Make sure they know that you care about them. Make sure they know that they are not alone and that you are there to assist them.

Be available to listen to your sponsors--their job is not easy. Establishing a relationship with the service member/Veteran may take time. Establishing trust may take more time. Often, especially in the early stages of the relationship, communication from the service member/Veteran may be sparse and lacking. Your sponsors may find that the challenges are daunting and frustrating. Be there to listen, guide, and support.

Disseminate relevant, helpful information to the sponsors and Veterans in your area. Newsletters, social media, email, and text messages are all means of communication that, depending upon the message, may be useful.

Build A Community.

Consider beginning the year with a formal get-together and following up with regularly scheduled monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly meetings for sponsors. These meetings provide the sponsor with the opportunity to share and learn from other sponsors' experiences. Sponsor meetings are an effective tool to help sponsor and service member/Veteran relationships endure and grow.

Consider hosting sponsor socials or mixers. Invite speakers and use the opportunity to conduct professional development classes. Consider inviting Veterans every other month.

Do your best to find the fine line between providing on-going support to the sponsor and recognizing that the sponsor has other responsibilities and time commitments. You want to support, but not overwhelm your sponsors with required meetings and trainings. Decide which

activities are mandatory and which are optional. Conduct meetings and training sessions at a time and place that is most convenient. Be open and amenable to input from your sponsors about what forms of support would be most useful for them.

Check in with your Sponsors.

Call, email, or text. Try some of these questions:

- How is your match going? How do you feel about being a sponsor?
- Do you spend much time talking with your service member/Veteran?
- Does your service member/Veteran keep scheduled appointments?
- When was your last scheduled meeting? What did you focus on?
- Do you need help with anything? Is there anything interfering with your match?
- Are you satisfied with how things are going?
- Is there any training you think would be helpful for you?
- Is there anything else we should be aware of?
- Is there anything we can do to help?

Equip Them with Tools.

All sponsors will complete the formal training and be given the opportunity for additional training sessions during the year. As you talk to your sponsors, try to identify areas that may need to be addressed for future training, or resources that may be helpful. If you see, read, or hear about any relevant information, forward it to your sponsors.

Remember Things About Them.

Know your team. Review the sponsor profiles and take note of their skills and talents. These sponsors may be able to assist you with other sponsors, and they may be able to serve your region in a greater capacity.

Engage Non-Responsive Participants.

If possible, reach out to sponsors who are not actively engaged with a service member/Veteran and invite them to all events and training sessions.

Keep track of the non-responsive sponsors and service members/Veterans in your community. Should one of your sponsors identify a service member/Veteran who is non-responsive, notify ETS-SP National. As needed, ETS-SP National will send an email to the non-responsive participant. Non-responsive participants who opt to drop out for personal reasons are invited to re-enter the program at any time.

Recognition!

Recognize both active and inactive sponsors in the following ways:

- Publish a monthly newsletter or calendar of relevant events for service members/Veterans.
- Highlight sponsors in the newsletter, recognizing milestones with the program (number of mentees, years with program, etc.).
- Highlight their achievements, and/or spotlight a group or individual on social media or the newsletter.

- Provide ongoing positive reinforcement.
- Treat your sponsors like an extension of your staff. Get to know the people who are giving up their time to work with you and your program.
- Invite sponsors to provide feedback. Show that you value their opinions.
- Encourage sponsors to recruit others.
- Let the sponsors know about the outcomes from the program.
- Never forget the power of a simple thank you, spoken or written.

IV. Support of Service Member/Sponsor Relationships

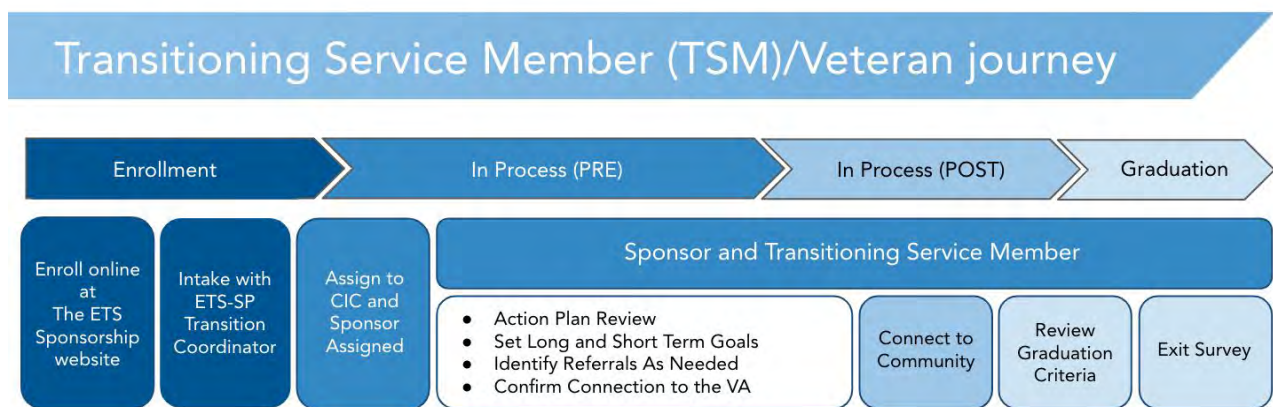
A. Administration

The ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator is responsible for the successful execution of ETS Sponsorship Program in their area. They market, recruit, enroll, and match the sponsor to transitioning service members. They monitor the relationship between the service member and sponsor; they understand this is the most important aspect of the program.

Oversight is facilitated by the dashboard provided by ETS-SP National. The dashboard includes the information set provided by the service member and data provided through the consent of the service member. This information set allows the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator to monitor risk factors, resilience and success. It also allows the Veteran to communicate to the Community Integration Coordinator and address any issues he/she might have with the sponsor.

If the service member fails to respond to the sponsor’s attempts to communicate, the sponsor reaches out to the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator. ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators are encouraged to attempt contact with the service member one final time before making ETS-SP National aware of the Veteran’s non-participation.

B. The Process



- 1) When a service member/Veteran completes an application on the ETS-SP website, an ETS-SP transition coordinator will be assigned. The ETS-SP transition coordinator will contact the service member/Veteran and conduct a brief intake. The information gathered by the transition coordinator is added to the service member/Veteran’s file in the ETS-SP National dashboard. ETS-SP National will then alert the appropriate ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator. The CIC will accept the file on their dashboard and make initial contact with the service member/Veteran.
- 2) When the service member/Veteran applied, he or she noted his or her preferred method of communication (phone, email, text). Using that preferred method of communication, the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will contact the service member/Veteran,

introduce themselves, answer any questions, and explain next steps. They will explain that they (ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator) will connect them to a sponsor shortly.

- 3) Next, the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will match the service member/Veteran with a sponsor. This connection is made using the matching tool provided by ETS-SP National and using the Community Integration Coordinator's unique understanding of the local area. The best possible match is made when personal stories, interests, hobbies, transition needs, long-term goals and experiences are factored into the decision to connect a particular sponsor to a particular service member.
- 4) The ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will send an email to both the sponsor and service member/Veteran matching the pair and introducing them to each other.
- 5) Throughout the journey that the service member/Veteran and sponsor take together, the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator is there to guide them and connect them to the various organizations that are available to make this transition successful. There are many best practice networks that accomplish these connections in local services (e.g., America's Warrior Partnership, Combined Arms, UniteUs, AmericaServes). Unfortunately, there is no uniform network that can connect all Veterans to each of the local communities across the nation. Therefore, ETS-SP National defers to the existing networks and agreements that already exist within local communities and does not prescribe utilization of any such platform. Instead, it is incumbent upon ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators to establish any additional MOUs or agreements to ensure Veterans have seamless access to the local community collaborative.
- 6) Toward the end of the journey, the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will be asked to assist the sponsor in assessing graduation readiness. Together with the sponsor and Veteran, the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator will determine whether or not the Veteran is ready to graduate. After graduating from the program, the relationship may continue to exist between the sponsor and Veteran, though not in a formal capacity.
- 7) ETS-SP recommends employment of a formal graduation acknowledgement or ceremony to bring closure to the sponsorship experience. This process should provide an opportunity for the sponsor and Veteran to reflect upon the relationship, discuss next steps for the Veteran, and provide feedback on the benefits of the program. Typically, this formal process occurs quarterly or semi-annually at a scheduled Community Integration Coordinator meeting.

V. Develop Local Support

The ETS Sponsorship Program is only effective if it works from the bottom up. Our focus, at every level of ETS-SP, must be the transitioning service member-Sponsor relationship. Everything we do must focus on supporting that relationship.

A. Promotion

ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators are encouraged to promote the ETS-SP in their communities by publicizing it. Some techniques for promotion follow:

- Speak on behalf of ETS-SP at local community clubs or organizations.
- Make a presentation to the city council or county commissioners.
- Write an article for the newspaper.
- Coordinate an interview by the local news outlets..
- Line up notable speakers for events; host an annual community collaborative dinner and invite Medal of Honor winners or a Senator or high-ranking military member to speak.

B. Partnerships

ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators recognize that the most effective way to assist our transitioning service members is to utilize all the resources and agencies available to us. Many organizations exist with the same purpose: To support Veterans. ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators are encouraged to coordinate with these collaborative partners and work together with them for the good of the Veteran. The sponsor should be able to contact the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator and ask questions about which organization would best be able to support a particular issue his/her Veteran may be facing. Ideally, the ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator is aware of the different support organizations available to the sponsor/Veteran in the community and makes appropriate and timely referrals when requested.

VI. Support the State and National Level

The ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinator supports the state and national level by:

1. Ensuring that the standards and policies of ETS-SP are met.
2. Participating in an assessment process conducted by ETS-SP National. This assessment process will be delineated by ETS-National and based on VA recommendations.
3. Continuously improving our programs. ETS-SP Community Integration Coordinators are encouraged to constantly be seeking improvement in the means we utilize to assist our service members/Veterans. The transition journey is a process and as our service members move back into our communities, we will learn more about how to improve upon the process. ETS-SP National needs your feedback to make ETS Sponsorship better. Use your dashboard, send an email or call whenever you can share thoughts for improvement.

VII. Resources

A. CIC Checklist

This document provides a checklist of suggested tasks involved to implement the ETS-SP program successfully in your service area as the Community Integration Coordinator. The checklist contains primary activities with multiple tasks within each one.

New Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) Checklist - Getting Started	
1. Hire/Designate Team	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop roles and qualifications.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hire/designate program coordinator and support staff if needed.
2. Evaluate and Certify the CIC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish a baseline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete the Community Profile Map. ○ Complete the Community Assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete formal evaluation based on Community Profile Map and Community Assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete CIC Training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verify Certification.
<input type="checkbox"/>	(One-Year Later) Complete Recertification.
3. Train ETS-SP Team	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a plan for orientation and team training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outline program guide and requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete ETS-SP Sponsor Training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete ETS-SP Dashboard Training (early 2021).
4. Develop/Review Program Policies, Procedures and Forms	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Utilize the ETS-SP Program Guide.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review the appropriate toolkits.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies and procedures to implement community collaborative protocol.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be Flexible! ETS-SP is a process and adjustments may be required for specific service areas.

5. Outreach and Referral

- Develop program information materials utilizing ETS-SP brand guidelines.
- Create web-based and paper-based materials to employ broad communication.
- Develop social media recruiting campaigns.
- Establish local referral partnerships and protocols.

6. ETS-SP Sponsors

Existing Sponsor Corps In Organization

- Review existing onboarding and training processes.
- Assess if training meets the ETS-SP certification standards.
- Plan for any training required to certify sponsors as ETS-SP certified.
- Review and assess existing sponsor roster.
- Establish a plan to onboard existing sponsors.
- Distribute outreach info to existing sponsors.
- Brief sponsors with an overview of the ETS-SP program.
- ETS-SP Training POC and Portal (Moodle Training Site)
- Invite prospective sponsors to enroll.
- Execute introduction and warm hand-off of sponsors from organization to ETS-SP.
- Establish a plan for retention of volunteers.

Building New Sponsor Corps

- Disseminate outreach and recruitment flyer info.
- ETS-SP Training POC and Portal (Portal - Moodle Training Site)
- Make the intro and facilitate a warm hand-off of new sponsors from ETS-SP to CIC.
- Identify community stakeholders, peers or social groups for direct appeal for assistance for resources. This may result in additional new sponsors.

7. ETS-SP Service Members (Enroll and Outreach)

- (If applicable): Enroll service members at nearby military installations.

8. Veterans Administration

- Identify local Transition Care Team (OEF/OIF/OND).
- Utilize the VA Transition and Care Management Team Locator.
- The Transition Patient Advocate (TPA) will act as a personal advocate as the SM moves throughout the VA healthcare system.

9. Build a Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> (If applicable): ETS National and CIC establish relationships with DoD personnel at respective service area military installations. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish any additional MOUs with local community Veteran best practice networks in your service area. <input type="checkbox"/> Promote within the community (i.e., present to city/county commissioners, article in a newspaper, hosting a community collaborative dinner. Support the State and National levels by ensuring the standards of ETS-SP are met. Comply with National volunteer criteria and policies; participate in assessment process conducted by ETS National; provide recommendation for areas of improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate regularly with the State Veteran Support Officer and ETS-SP National. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify key community stakeholders and partners as resources for each domain. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop protocols and resources for challenges and high risk behaviors for local community response.
10. Build a Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TBD - tailored to each community.

B. Daily/Monthly Task Checklist

Community Integration Coordinator (CIC) Task Timeline
Ongoing Tasks
<p><i>ETS-SP Community Integration Administration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Connect with community groups, Veteran groups and other interested organizations to further enhance the efforts of the sponsors and Veterans in the region. <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit and maintain a local sponsor corps. <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with ETS-SP National to provide feedback for adjustments/improvements. <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in ETS-SP National assessment based on VA recommendations. <input type="checkbox"/> Perform any additional duties as directed by ETS-SP National. <p><i>ETS-SP Community Integration Marketing and Communications</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a communications strategy for providing information and updates to sponsors and service members/Veterans (i.e. website, social media, email distribution list). <input type="checkbox"/> Develop sponsor communication plan, monthly email or virtual meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Create a newsletter or some other form of communication to maintain sponsor retention and interest. <input type="checkbox"/> Reward and recognize sponsors as appropriate.

Daily Tasks

ETS-SP Sponsors

- Review current sponsor roster to assess if roster is adequate to pair enrollment.
- Coordinate with recruitment to keep an active robust roster.
- Send a welcome communication to the newly enrolled sponsor.
- Track progress of the sponsor training process utilizing the dashboard.
- Maintain sponsor Volunteer Policy contracts and ensure compliance.
- Equip sponsors with tools and community resources to help support their roles.
- Be available to answer questions from the sponsor.
- Provide guidance and support to help the sponsor-Veteran pairs.
- Engage non-responsive sponsors; Reach out to sponsors who are not actively engaged with their service member/Veteran.
- Evaluate when goals have been met and assess graduation readiness by communicating with the sponsor AND service member.

ETS-SP Service Members

- Accept service member/Veteran file from ETS-SP National.
- Send Introduction communication to the service member/Veteran.
- Match sponsors selectively with a service member/Veteran based on compatibility of goals, interests, or preferences from active sponsor roster.
- Send communication to introduce the service member with the sponsor.
- Send follow up communication to ensure the service member/Veteran and sponsor have made contact.
- Monitor risk factors, resilience and success of the service member-sponsor pair using the dashboard.
- Be available to answer questions from the service member/Veteran.

Monthly Tasks

ETS-SP Sponsors

- Schedule monthly bimonthly, or quarterly meetings for sponsors (virtual or in-person); provide developmental activities such as seminars, networking events or guest speakers.

ETS-SP Service Members

- Transition Coordinator checks in with service members/Veterans.