

Request for Proposal (RFP) for Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP) Financial Counseling Services

Issued By: Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA)

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Response Due Date: 30 April 2025

Contact Person: Andia Dinesen, andia.dinesen@ambahq.org, 540-347-3305, ext. 2

1. Introduction & Purpose

The Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA), the 501c6 non-profit partner of the Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP), is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to provide comprehensive financial counseling services to Veterans, VA beneficiaries, survivors, and caregivers.

Purpose: To offer personalized financial counseling that addresses the unique financial challenges faced by the Veteran community, aiding them in achieving financial stability and well-being.

Target Audience: Veterans, VA beneficiaries, survivors, and their caregivers.

Strategic Goals:

- Enhance financial literacy and management skills among participants.
- Provide tailored financial solutions to meet individual needs.
- Ensure accessibility to quality financial counseling services.

Period of Performance:

- One year from time of funds disbursement, on or about 1 July 2025. (Subject to receipt of funds.)

2. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will be responsible for delivering the following services:

- **Financial Counseling Services:** Provide up to three (3) 1- hour consultations or sessions at no cost to program participants, focusing on areas such as budgeting, debt management, retirement planning, and credit improvement.
- **Delivery Methods:** Offer flexible counseling options, including virtual sessions (video or phone) and, where feasible, in-person meetings.
- **Topics Covered:** Address issues pertinent to the Veteran community, including but not limited to:
 - Budgeting
 - Debt reduction strategies
 - Foreclosure or eviction prevention
 - First-time home purchase guidance
 - Financial planning for education, career transitions, or retirement
- **Language & Accessibility:** Ensure services are accessible to all participants, accommodating language preferences and any special needs.
- **Training:** Provide program orientation, company onboarding, resources training, and training to financial counselors. Provide education and training on the Veterans

Benefits Banking Program (VBBP) to include bank/credit union finder and VetCents and Veteran Saves programs.

- **Referral process:** Provide or offer referral process to connect with non-profit credit counseling services for counseling participants who may require a debt management plan (DMP) to assist with specific situations.
- **Provider Certification:** Financial Counselors must hold a national financial certification such as Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC®), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC®), or Certified Financial Planner (CFP®), or equivalent. Provide verification of counselors' good standing of credential upon selection hire and at least annually thereafter.

3. Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

To maintain a high standard of service, the vendor is expected to meet the following SLAs:

- **Number of Sessions:** Offer up to three complimentary sessions per participant. Counselors must agree to a non-solicitation agreement throughout the 3 completed sessions.
- **Availability:** Counselors must initiate first contact within 48-72 business hours upon receiving a participant's request.
- **Response Time:** Timely responses to participant inquiries, with a maximum response window of 24 hours during business days.

4. Special Requirements, Additional Support, and Expectations

The vendor must provide:

- **Web Portal Integration:** Develop and maintain web platform (or partner with an agency) to facilitate easy scheduling and resource access for participants and counselors. Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) is the current and preferred platform.
- **Reporting Needs:** Ensure efficient data sharing and reporting of summary utilization data of the VBBP counselling to AMBA in the format of a Monthly Status Report, including but not limited to pre-and post-session questionnaires submissions.

The vendor should provide:

- **Specialized Experience:** The Vendor should demonstrate experience in providing similar services to the military/veteran community across multiple locations.
- **Customization Needs:** Tailor counseling services to address the specific financial challenges prevalent within the Veteran community.
- **Client Satisfaction Metrics:** A feedback mechanism to achieve a minimum satisfaction rating of 90% or higher.

5. Proposal Submission Instructions

Interested vendors should submit proposals that include:

- **Proposal Format:**
 1. **Cover Letter:** Introduction and summary of the proposal.
 2. **Proposal should include items below within the Statement of Work:**

- **Company Background & Experience:** Overview of the organization's history, mission, and experience in providing financial counseling services, particularly to the Veteran community.
 - **Proposed Approach & Methodology:** Detailed plan for service delivery, including counseling methods, tools, and resources.
 - **Qualifications & Staffing Plan:** Information on the qualifications of counselors, including certifications and relevant experience.
 - **Technology & Security Measures:** Description of the technological infrastructure and measures in place to protect participant data.
 - **Service Level Commitments:** Confirmation of the ability to meet or exceed the outlined SLAs.
3. **Case Studies or References:** Examples of previous work with similar programs or populations can be included as a supplement to the proposal.
- **Submission Method:** Proposals should be submitted electronically with two PDFs, one Cover Letter and one combined proposal and Statement of Work via email to andia.dinesen@ambahq.org with the subject line "Proposal for VBBP Financial Counseling Services."
 - **Deadline:** All proposals must be received by Wednesday, 30 April 2025 at 5:00 PM EDT.
 - **Questions & Clarifications:** Any questions regarding the RFP should be directed to Andia Dinesen at andia.dinesen@ambahq.org no later than Friday, 18 April 2025 at 5:00 PM EDT. Responses to all submitted questions will be shared on 25 April 2025 by 5:00 PM EDT with all potential bidders to ensure transparency. *If you are considering responding to the proposal, you must [fill out this form](#) by 18 April 2025 to receive answers to questions submitted.*

6. Pricing & Cost Proposal

Quote should be presented as administrative/overhead costs plus cost per session.

- A cost breakdown is expected with the estimated budget range of \$200,000 to \$300,000, aligning with the proposed deliverables.
- If the cost per session cost needs to be inclusive of start-up costs, cost per session can be scaled. For example, costs per session for sessions 1 – 100 would cost \$XXX.XX, sessions 101 – 200 would cost \$XXX.XX, and so forth.
- **Optional proposal inclusion:** Outreach and promotional activities included as “per hour sessions” to increase awareness and viability of the counseling program and overall VBBP initiative.

7. Evaluation Criteria

While cost is a factor, the primary evaluation criteria will be:

- **Experience & Expertise:** Demonstrated history of providing financial counseling services, especially to the Veteran/Military community. Experience & Expertise are more important than Service Offerings and Technology & Integration combined.
- **Service Offerings & SLAs:** Ability to meet the outlined scope of work and service level agreements.

- **Technology & Integration:** Application of technological integration.
- **Implementation Plan** – Realistic timelines and methodology for execution.

Terms and Conditions

1. General Conditions

- This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by the Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA), a non-profit partner of the Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP).
- Participation in this RFP does not obligate AMBA to award a contract, nor does it commit AMBA to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of proposals.
- AMBA reserves the right to modify or cancel this RFP at any time, without prior notice.

2. Scope of Services

- The selected vendor will provide **comprehensive financial counseling services** to Veterans, VA beneficiaries, survivors, and caregivers.
- Services must align with AMBA's strategic goals, ensuring **enhanced financial literacy, personalized financial solutions, and accessibility** to counseling resources.

3. Proposal Submission Guidelines

- Proposals must be submitted by April 30, 2025, following the format and requirements outlined in the RFP.
- Late submissions will not be considered.
- All submitted materials will become the property of AMBA and will not be returned.

4. Period of Performance

- The contract period will be **one year from the time of funds disbursement**, estimated to commence **on or about July 1, 2025** (subject to receipt of funds).

5. Selection Criteria

- AMBA will evaluate proposals based on:
 1. **Experience & Expertise:** Demonstrated history of providing financial counseling services, especially to the Veteran/Military community. Experience & Expertise are more important than Service Offerings and Technology & Integration combined.
 2. **Service Offerings & SLAs:** Ability to meet the outlined scope of work and service level agreements.
 3. **Technology & Integration:** Application of technological integration.
 4. **Implementation Plan** – Realistic timelines and methodology for execution.
 5. **Cost Proposal** – Budget within the expected range of **\$200,000 to \$300,000** that aligns with deliverables.
- AMBA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, negotiate terms, and select a vendor at its discretion.

6. Compliance & Legal Obligations

- The selected vendor must comply with **all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations** related to financial counseling services.

- Any subcontracting must be disclosed and pre-approved by AMBA.
- Vendors must maintain **confidentiality** of all client information and adhere to applicable data protection standards.

7. Payment Terms

- Payment schedule will be determined upon contract award.
- Payments will be contingent on meeting agreed-upon milestones and deliverables.

8. Termination Clause

- AMBA reserves the right to terminate the contract for **non-performance, breach of contract, or changes in funding availability**, with a 30-day written notice.

9. Questions & Clarifications

- Any questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing by April 18, 2025
- Responses will be provided to all interested vendors to ensure a fair and transparent process.

10. Governing Law

- This agreement shall be governed by the laws of Virginia.