

How to Create a Student Veteran Organization

Ohio State's Vets 4 Vets

Creating a student veteran organization is a great idea for institutions of higher education in order to make the veterans feel more welcome on campus, as well as to provide an opportunity to make new social bonds. The Ohio State's Vets 4 Vets carries on the "No Man Left Behind" mentality by recreating the comradery that the members are all used to from the military. Here are some sample steps that to start your own institution's student veteran group:

1. Contact Your Institution's Student Life

- Contact your institution's student life board, or whoever coordinates the student organizations on campus, and see what requirements need to be met in order to become an official organization.

2. Recruit Members

- This is generally thought to be the last step; however, most institutions have a minimum requirement of members in order to apply for an organizational status.

3. Find a Faculty Advisor

- Preferably find a faculty or staff member who is also a veteran who understands what you are trying to create.

4. Draft the Organization's Constitution

- A sample [constitution](#) is available on the toolkit to gain ideas on your organizational structure, by-laws, and operations. Keep in mind that this is going to be your institutional organization, so make it unique and special for the students that the organization will serve.

5. Apply for an Organizational Status with Your Institution

- By this step, your organization should have met the requirements set in place by your institution. You may be required to complete Step 7 before an organizational status can be considered by your institution. This step may vary from institution to institution.

6. Make a Plan

- Decide with the current members the roles and functionalities of the organization. What type of social, fundraising, and service events does your organization want to have? How does your organization want to get involved with the campus?

7. Decide What, if Any, National Organization to Join

- The Ohio State's Vets 4 Vets is a chapter of the Student Veterans of America; however, there are other choices, including becoming an individual chapter. It is important to research all options and select the one that will match your organization's needs and plans for sustainability. Currently existing national organizations include:
 - i. Student Veterans of America
 - ii. Omega Delta Sigma (National Veteran Fraternity)
 - iii. American Legion

8. Plan for Meetings/Recruit Additional Members

- Your organization is now ready to begin holding general meetings and recruiting additional members, which is essential when trying to make your organization thrive after your departure. Be sure to be planning for this in advance by preparing and mentoring your potential replacements.

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9. Tips :

- Work with your institution's military/veteran student office on campus. They can be great resources for working with the institution's administration.
- Don't alienate the ROTC program if your campus has one. Work with them to achieve your organizational goals. This is also to help prepare future officers and to provide them with teachable moments and helpful tips.
- Create an organizational manual that can be passed down in either a physical or digital format. History can help the next leadership learn from the past and plan to grow strategically.
- Create and host an annual event that people can associate with your group. This helps to get recognition and recruit future members.
- Reach out to other student veteran organizations and find ways to collaborate (on activities, events, etc.).
- Use college rivalries to your organization's benefit.