



The CoBank “No Barriers” Program For Veterans With Disabilities From Rural Communities

An opportunity for veterans with disabilities to challenge themselves, overcome barriers and learn that “what’s within them is stronger than what’s in their way.”



THE EXPEDITIONS

What is the CoBank “No Barriers” program?

The program is a partnership between CoBank and No Barriers USA for 2017. It allows eligible customers of the bank to nominate veterans with disabilities from rural communities to participate in one of four, five-day No Barriers Warriors expeditions. Expeditions take place in Colorado and are designed to help veterans with disabilities to transform their lives through curriculum-based experiences in challenging environments.

How many veterans can participate?

CoBank will sponsor up to 50 veterans with disabilities to participate in this program for 2017. Veterans who are unable to take part in an expedition due to physical limitations or other reasons may attend the annual No Barriers Summit as an alternative. CoBank will cover the full cost of the program for each veteran, including meals, gear, and travel expenses.

What does a No Barriers Warriors expedition involve?

No Barriers Warriors’ expeditions are described as “one part adventure, one part curriculum, and one part physical challenge.” Each expedition is designed to push participants mentally and physically to help them connect with fellow veterans and break through barriers in their lives. The CoBank-sponsored expedition series will take place in Colorado and will include activities such as mountaineering, rafting and rock climbing. Activities are specifically designed to accommodate participation by veterans with disabilities.



Is the program open to every branch of the service?

Yes. The program is open to veterans from all eras and branches, combat and non-combat, with visible and invisible injuries. Participating veterans must have a VA disability rating.

What kind of disabilities can the program accommodate?

The program can accommodate veterans with a variety of physical disabilities as well as “invisible” disabilities like PTSD.

When will the expeditions take place?

CoBank will sponsor four, five-day expeditions in 2017 on the following dates: July 6-10; August 3-7; August 10-14; and September 7-11.

Where will the expeditions take place?

Expeditions will take place at the No Barriers facility in the Red Feather Lakes region of Colorado.

Is there any cost to the veteran to participate?

No. CoBank is underwriting all costs for participating veterans, including transportation to the expedition location.

Why should a disabled veteran participate in this program?

Each No Barriers Warriors expedition is designed to push veterans mentally and physically in some of nature’s most incredible wilderness settings. No Barriers creates a safe space for veterans to reflect on their past, recognize where they are in the present and then look with positivity to the future. They do so in a spirit of camaraderie; where veterans with a shared background come together to encourage and inspire each other. The No Barriers experience serves as both an opportunity for growth and a catalyst for change as the veterans stretch their boundaries, innovate through adversity and step up to serve others.

Why is CoBank offering this program?

For generations, rural America has produced a disproportionate share of our armed forces. As a mission-based organization with a focus on agriculture and rural communities, CoBank wanted to create a program that would allow the bank to give back to our nation’s rural veterans in a substantive way, in partnership with its customers.



THE SUMMIT

What is the No Barriers Summit?

The No Barriers Summit is a four-day event designed to inspire. The event includes a series of inspirational speakers, a showcase of cutting-edge innovations and adaptive technology for those with disabilities. It features more than 50 adaptive activities that will help participants break through barriers and connect with the No Barriers community. People of all abilities from across the USA and around the world participate in the event which includes adaptive activities in Sports, Adventure, Arts and Education. The 2017 Summit will take place on June 1-4, at the Resort

at Squaw Creek, North Lake Tahoe, California.

How many people participate in the Summit?

The annual Summit hosts more than 1,000 people each year from across the USA and around the world.

Is the Summit open to non-veterans?

Yes. The Summit is open to all and, in fact, many participants bring their family with them so that they too can benefit from the experience. While the event is not specifically geared towards veterans, it does offer a special “veterans track” that will replicate much of the curriculum and experiences of the No Barriers Warriors expeditions in a more accessible way to accommodate veterans whose level of disability prevents them from participating in an expedition.

Can family members of veterans participate in the Summit?

Yes. Selected veterans who are unable to participate in an expedition will receive a scholarship allowing them and a caregiver/family member to attend the 2017 No Barriers Summit. Veterans who wish to include additional family members in the experience may do so at their own cost.



NOMINATION/NOMINEES

Who can nominate a veteran for participation in the program?

CoBank's cooperative and other eligible customers may nominate a single veteran with a disability from their community to participate in this program. Nomination does not guarantee acceptance and the program will be limited to the first 50 nominees who meet the program requirements.

How are nominees determined?

Customers are encouraged to design their own process for identifying veterans to nominate for the program. It is permissible to nominate a member of your staff, a customer, or any individual in your community you believe is worthy of recognition. Each eligible CoBank customer may nominate a single veteran to participate. Nominees must be a disabled veteran of the U.S. armed forces.

Once I submit my nomination, what happens next?

CoBank will conduct an initial review of the nomination and contact the nominating customer to ensure all the necessary information has been provided. After that, CoBank will forward the nomination form to the No Barriers organization. No Barriers will review each nomination and contact nominated veterans directly to provide further information and encourage them to complete a formal application. Because of the specific requirements of the program and to respect the privacy of nominated veterans, CoBank will not participate in the application/acceptance process. Once a veteran has been accepted by No Barriers into the program, CoBank will be notified and will, in turn, notify the nominating customer.

What does the application process look like?

The application process includes completing an online form, interview, and medical screening. Once a nominee decides to apply, the veteran must complete the No Barriers online application. Once the application is complete, the veteran will be contacted for a phone interview conducted by a member of the No Barriers staff to ensure he or she meets eligibility requirements, understands the expedition format, and is prepared for the physical and mental challenges involved with the expedition. The next step in the process is medical screening conducted by a doctor trained in high altitude, back-country medicine. Once an applicant has completed these steps, they will be placed on a specific expedition team.

Selected veterans who are unable to participate in the expedition due to physical or other limitations will be offered the opportunity to attend the No Barriers Summit as an alternative.



How long does the application/selection process take?

The application process takes about a month from the time the veteran completes the application.

How will I know if my nominee is selected for participation?

Once a veteran has been accepted by No Barriers into the program, CoBank will be notified and will, in turn, notify the nominating customer.

Will I be notified if my nominee is unable or unwilling to participate?

Customers are encouraged to only nominate veterans with an interest in participating in a No Barriers expedition or the No Barriers Summit. If a nominated veteran later decides they are unable or unwilling to take part in the program, CoBank will notify the nominating customer.

IMPORTANT 2017 DATES/DEADLINES

January 1	CoBank will begin accepting nominations for the CoBank-sponsored No Barriers Warriors expeditions. Nominations will continue to be accepted through May 1 or until all slots are filled – whichever comes first.
March 1	Nominations for Expedition 1 close, in order to give No Barriers time to select, register, and medically screen participants as well as enough time to conduct on-boarding. Nominations will be transmitted to No Barriers as they are received. The No Barriers team will then contact the nominated veteran and advise them of the application process.
April 1	Nominations for Expedition 2 & 3 Close.
May 1	Nominations for Expedition 4 close.
May 6	On-boarding begins for Expedition 1. No Barriers will on-board participants for other expeditions on a rolling basis.
July 6-10	Expedition 1
August 3-7	Expedition 2
August 10-14	Expedition 3
September 7-11	Expedition 4