

The CoBank “No Barriers” Program for Rural Veterans

THE EXPEDITIONS

What is the CoBank and No Barriers program?

CoBank, a cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America has partnered with No Barriers USA to sponsor a series of four, five-day expeditions through No Barriers Warriors. No Barriers USA is a nonprofit organization that empowers people of all walks of life to overcome obstacles, live a life of purpose, and give back to the world, through its ground-breaking curriculum. The Warriors program is designed specifically to serve veterans with disabilities.

Through this program, CoBank customers (cooperatives and other businesses serving rural America) are able to nominate/refer veterans with disabilities from their communities to participate in an expedition designed to challenge their limitations and to create a network of support that can last a lifetime.

What does a No Barriers Warriors expedition involve?

The 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 life. The CoBank-sponsored expeditions will take place in Colorado. The moderate-level expeditions will include activities such as hiking, rafting and rock climbing and are specifically designed to accommodate participation by veterans with disabilities. The difficult-level expeditions are back-country treks that involve a mountain summit-attempt. They are designed for those with a higher level of physical fitness.

How many veterans will participate?

CoBank will sponsor up to 50 veterans. Participants will take part in one of four, five-day expeditions or the No Barriers Summit.

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.

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 which will take place in July and August 2018. CoBank will also sponsor several veterans to participate in the annual No Barriers Summit which takes place October 5-6 in New York City.

Where will the expeditions take place?

Moderate-level expeditions will take place at the No Barriers facility at Red Feather Lakes, Colorado. Difficult-level expeditions will take place in the Colorado back-country.

Is there any cost to participate?

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

Why should I consider participating?

Each No Barriers Warriors expedition is designed to challenge you mentally and physically in some of nature's most incredible wilderness. This is more than a mountain vacation. No Barriers creates a safe space to reflect on your past, recognize where you are in the present and then look with positivity to the future. They do so in a spirit of camaraderie. On a No Barriers expedition you will come together with other veterans with a shared background to encourage and inspire each other. The No Barriers experience serves as both an opportunity for growth and a catalyst for change. It is a chance to stretch your boundaries, innovate through adversity and step up to serve others.

What if I am not physically able to participate in an expedition?

Veterans who are nominated/referred and accepted into the program, but choose not to participate due to their disability, may be offered an opportunity to participate in the annual No Barriers Summit. The Summit is available to individuals of any disability level.

Why is CoBank offering this program?

For generations, a disproportionate share of our armed forces have come from our rural communities. As a mission-based organization with a focus on agriculture and rural communities, CoBank wanted to partner with our customers to create a program that would allow the bank to give back to our nation's rural veterans in a substantive way.

THE SUMMIT

What is the No Barriers Summit?

No Barriers Summit: New York City is a premiere immersive event that brings together people of all backgrounds and abilities who are transcending barriers to unleash their fullest potential and live a life of purpose. *No Barriers Summit: NYC* provides inspirational storytelling, curriculum to live by, and authentic experiences and connection to others — all packaged in a two-day event that feels like an outdoor festival with the energy of a live concert! No Barriers is an inclusive community and the entire event is accessible. When you get here, everything changes. And when you leave, nothing is ever the same.

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 they can also 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 setting.

Can family members of veterans participate in the Summit?

Yes. If you are selected to attend the Summit, you will be able to bring a caregiver/family member with you. CoBank will cover all costs for you and your caregiver. If you wish to include additional family members in the experience, you may do so at your own cost.

NOMINATIONS/REFERRALS/APPLICATIONS

I’ve been nominated/referred by a CoBank customer, what do I do next?

The CoBank customer will provide you with an information sheet that includes more detail about the program or you may access the information at <http://www.cobank.com/About-CoBank/Corporate-Citizenship-Pages/No-Barriers-Program.aspx> where you will also find a link to the CoBank/No Barriers program application. Please ensure that you apply directly through the CoBank website. No Barriers may offer other expedition programs with other sponsors, but you have been nominated specifically for the CoBank program.

If you wish to take advantage of this opportunity, fill out and submit your application as soon as possible. Nominations/Applications will be considered on a first-come first-served basis and you must submit your application prior to the April 15 deadline in order to be considered.

Once you have submitted your application, you will be contacted directly by a No Barriers representative who will provide additional information and walk you through the next steps in the process.

How do I get accepted into the program?

The process begins with a phone interview. No Barriers will provide you with additional information about the expeditions to determine your interest and ability to participate. They may require additional information about your disability status. The final step in the acceptance process is a telephone evaluation by the No Barriers affiliated physician to ensure that you are physically able to participate. No Barriers is able to accommodate a wide range of disabilities. This process will help them to understand

your needs and abilities and make sure expedition leaders are prepared to help you take full advantage of the experience.

IMPORTANT DATES/DEADLINES

January 15 – April 15, 2018	The nomination/referral/application period for 2018 expeditions begins January 15 and will continue through April 15. Veterans must submit their application prior to April 15 to be considered.
June 8, 2018	No Barriers will complete the review and acceptance process. Full teams for all expeditions will be announced on CoBank.com
July 5-9, 2018	The first moderate-level expedition will take place.
July 19 – 23, 2018	The second moderate-level expedition will take place.
August 3-7, 2018	The first difficult-level expedition will take place.
August 17-21	The second difficult-level expedition will take place.
To Be Announced	The No Barriers Summit will take place October 5-6 in New York City