



Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP): Job Development and Retention

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NVTAC Role

- Provide technical assistance designed to increase grantees' ability to establish and operate successful HVRP grants.
- Support HVRP grantees throughout their period of performance to ensure that challenges are resolved quickly.
- Provide effective training and peer-to-peer learning opportunities that result in increased knowledge and adoption of innovative practices among HVRP programs nationwide.

NVTAC Role

- Provide technical expertise to federal staff to assist in policy development in support of program oversight and strategic planning for the future of HVRP.
- Quantify grantees' customer satisfaction and share promising practices and lessons learned.

Job Development

Job Development: Key Points

- Manage expectations beginning at outreach
- Understand the local job market
- Have a strategy to approach employers
- Utilize all resources/supports: It takes a village!

Remember:

Veteran-centered job development and placement equal successful job outcomes!

Manage Expectations

Educating the veteran about realistic expectations is essential to the job development process and begins with outreach. This includes gaining knowledge and mutual understanding of:

- The veteran's expectations of HVRP services and employment
- The hard and soft skills required for their chosen career
- The veteran's current skill sets
- Job interview skills
- Long-term career goals

Understanding the Local Job Market

Understanding the local job market is essential to access meaningful job opportunities to ensure veterans match their skills and career goals. It involves:

- Researching and analyzing local job market data
- Networking with local business associations
- Developing a job bank of current job postings
- Developing an internal database of HVRP participant skill sets

Approaching Employers

Some key strategies to approach employers are:

- Listen and learn about the workplace and employer
- Ask to tour the workplace
- Sell the advantages of hiring veterans
- Beyond human resources staff, learn who has direct hiring responsibility
- Seek to have the HVRP viewed as a no-cost talent source
- Maintain consistent contact to develop a long-term partnership
- Individualize the job development pitch

Utilizing Resources and Supports

For the veteran:

- Family and friends
- Peers
- Within the workplace

For the HVRP:

- Existing internal and external partnerships
- Colleagues who view employment as a solution to ending veteran homelessness

Dr. Lore' L. Chambers

St. James



Homeless Veteran Re-Integration Program (HVRP)

Veteran Placement Presentation

**By: Dr. Lore' L. Chambers
St. James A.M.E. Zion Church – Zion House**

Reaching The Goal of Placement

- **Timing**
- **Collaboration**
- **Communication**
- **Placement**
- **Follow-up**

Timing

- Veterans are engaged with the goal of employment placement in mind. As such, from the first encounter with the development of the Individual employment plan (IEP), the case manager should be mindful of matching the Veteran's desires with available opportunities.
- It is important to maximize information received during the assessment to present the best fit, matching the Veteran's skills with available positions.
- Depending on locations, positions are filled quickly, as such, case managers should move quickly by case conferencing with team members, community members, and employers to ensure a viable placement.
- Keep in mind that placement without readiness equals failure.

Collaboration

- Building a team through collaboration with COC members, American Job Centers, Chamber of Commerce, colleges, and employers will assist in amassing a wealth of information about job availability in your locale.
- This team will also be helpful in addressing barriers to placement, such as mental health, behavioral health, and job readiness training. Most Veterans we have encountered may enroll with the agreement of seeking and building skills toward a career placement, but end up taking “survival” jobs, which may not cover basic expenses.
- Skipping the step of addressing barriers almost assures placement failure. Working collaborative with the COC team to include Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF), HUD/VASH and legal aid can reduce some of the financial pressure, so that the Veterans can concentrate on the available training to provide a better employment “fit”.

Communication

- Contact with the Veteran should be often, I recommend a weekly call to relay training information, available positions that may be of interest and assessing any transportation needs.
- The Veterans should not have the excuse of “not hearing from the case manager”. Depending on employment availability, the Veterans should be provided at least two to three job leads per encounter until placed.
- One of the greatest challenges I hear from staff is that the Veterans are not answering our calls. That’s where the team can be engaged. If the Veteran is enrolled with SSVF or HUD/VASH the case managers should case conference to determine the last contact with the Veteran and any issues that may be hindering the Veteran’s job search. The team members can also bring pressure to bear in that program agreements require compliance with increasing income to obtain/sustain housing.

Placement

- Depending on employment availability, job placement should be accomplished within 30 days of enrollment. This is an aggressive expectation, however, if we do not consistently communicate with the Veterans and assist with training and placement quickly, they tend to lose interest and stop answering their phones. Especially if our partner agencies such as SSVF and HUD/VASH have addressed the immediate housing crisis.
- Building relationships with hiring managers is essential to the success of the Veterans placements. These relationships give the employer a point of contact in case any issues arise that can jeopardize the placement. If a placement is unsuccessful, a good relationship and communication may ensure the hiring manager may consider hiring other Veterans in the future.
- If the Veteran finds a position on their own and it is a “survival” job, please consider not taking credit for that placement and continue to work with the Veteran to receive a more viable position, especially if the Veteran is motivated and cooperative.

Follow Up

- Once a Veteran is placed, staff is encouraged to touch base with the Veteran to gauge how he/she is doing. Without this on-going communication, we have found that some Veterans “churn” jobs. We check at the end of the quarter for follow-up reporting only to find that the Veteran is no longer employed, and we have to start the process again, if they still qualify.
- Just an aside, as grantees, we are also employers. We have hired persons who presented for services, stabilized their housing and assisted with qualifying them for higher paying jobs.

Questions???

Please feel free to contact us at (410) 742-4950, ext. 112

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**What are some of your effective
job development strategies?**

Job Retention

Job Retention: Key Points

- Clear expectations
- Prevent and plan
- Tracking employment
- Celebrate success

Clear Expectations

Combined with the job development process, defining specific post-job placement expectations are essential for both the veteran and HVRP provider. For example:

For the veteran:

- Salary and promotion opportunities
- On-going support from personal, workplace, and program resources
- Workplace culture and expectations

For the HVRP provider:

- Veteran will provide salary information/paystubs
- Will proactively contact if a workplace issue occurs

Prevent and Plan

- Identify job-specific stressors that can be caused by people, tasks, or the physical environment
- Help the veteran connect these stressors to specific workplace behaviors/actions that could lead to losing the job
- Develop an action plan/coping strategy to address these behaviors using all supports
- Discuss possible ways to remove these stressors prior to starting work
- Reinforce that feeling stress at work is a normal condition

Tracking Employment

Beyond emphasizing that HVRP provides post-placement follow-up, an HVRP participant is expected to provide employment information. These techniques can be considered:

- Follow up directly with the employer (email/phone/site visit)
- Connect with family, friends, and workplace colleagues (if applicable)
- Via direct email
- Develop a peer support group at the HVRP site for working veterans

Celebrating Success

It is important to recognize the achievements of HVRP participants who have become employed. It is also an opportunity for staff to celebrate as well. This can be accomplished through activities such as:

- Providing a lunch or dinner for working veterans
- Showcasing a wall of photos of working veterans in a high visibility area
- Asking employed veteran(s) to attend and/or present at agency events

How are you supporting veterans' post-placement?

**What are some ways that you
celebrate employment success?**

Questions?

Thank you!

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