

**National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC)
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Virtual Learning Courses (VLC)
Session 1 of 4: HVRP Success Strategies
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Key Points

- **Introduction**
 - NVTAC reminded attendees that HVRP best practices would be shared during this session. NVTAC encouraged all grantees to utilize best practices that may improve their service delivery. Before implementing a practice discussed during this session, grantees must review their award statement of work and contact their Grant Officer's Technical Representative (GOTR) to discuss if it is an allowable cost or activity or if it requires an amendment to their approved plan.
 - **NVTAC Overview:** NVTAC provides individualized technical assistance (TA), training, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and additional support to HVRP grantees. To contact NVTAC or request TA, reach out to contact@nvtac.org.
- **Skills for Outreach**
 - Outreach to Community Partners
 - Creating an outreach strategy to target community partners will look very different than outreach to employers and veterans. Veteran-centric agencies such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), county veteran services officers, the department for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and American Legions are important partners. Looking at non-veteran-centric agencies is crucial as well. Identify where veterans who don't necessarily identify as a veteran go, such as church groups or LGBTQI+ resources and food pantries that may also serve [veterans](#).
 - Identifying mainstream services that are not centered around the military but rather around their day-to-day life is also important. Identifying housing supports that may be military-affiliated can help prevent eviction and homelessness as they have a better understanding of potential challenges. Think outside of the box for other local resources. Where can you go in your community to find other potential partners?
 - Everyone on your HVRP team should feel comfortable and confident discussing HVRP with community partners. What is your mission and passion for helping the participants?

- Outreach to Employers
 - Grantees should have a clear strategy to connect with employers. There are veteran-friendly employers all over the nation; grantees should consider looking at state job postings as they typically list which employers are veteran-friendly. Websites such as [Recruit Military](#) and [Hire Heroes USA](#) are excellent resources that host job fairs and events specifically geared toward veterans.
 - All HVRP grantees should ensure they are available for follow-up services for employers and the veteran participants. Consistency and timeliness with communication is essential.
 - Before asking employers for help, offer HVRP services by letting them know what your agency can bring to the table and the value that is added by hiring a veteran. How can you help reduce attrition and help prevent veteran job loss? HVRP grantees should be a resource for both the veteran and the employer.
- Outreach to Veteran Participants
 - When creating an outreach strategy, understanding where potential participants spend time is crucial. It is important to meet the veterans where they are when conducting outreach. To help increase your HVRP presence, visit events and meetings that veterans frequent, such as the American Legions, chili cook-offs, and Grant Per Diem (GPD) programs. Create a relationship with your state and county U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offices for any available resources.
 - Visit non-military locations and events such as churches, shelters, and domestic violence shelters to build rapport and partner with them to create a mutual referral process. Every county should have a veteran service officer that connects with the veterans in the area. You can learn a lot by talking to other organizations about how they connect with veterans.
- **Skills for Eligibility, Assessment, and Intake**
 - Eligibility, Assessment, and Intake
 - Before entering a veteran into HVRP, you must determine if the participant is a veteran and either experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. After determining whether the veteran is eligible, you can begin the assessment process. During the assessment process, you gain insight into the educational background, employment skills and experiences, and barriers or challenges to the veteran's employment.
 - You will also need to obtain information from the veteran regarding potential supports and their level of readiness to start working. You must help the veteran identify other wrap-around supports because HVRP will not be there for them forever. A support system alongside HVRP can help the veteran successfully maintain long-term employment.

- After assessing the veteran to determine if they are eligible for HVRP, you will begin the intake process to gather information from the veteran to determine the right time to enroll in HVRP. As direct service HVRP staff, you want the best for the veteran, but they might not be ready to enter the workforce immediately. Please be patient with the assessment process.
- What is a Qualifying Veteran?
 - Grantees will first need to determine the veteran status within the military and identify what branch of the military they served in. That veteran must have at least one day of active duty (excluding basic training or Advanced Individual Training for Reserve or National Guard component) and served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, or Reserve Component (National Guard and Reserve), or the veteran must have any period of active duty for training resulting in a service-connected disability resulting from disease or disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty (including basic training or Advanced Individual Training for Reserve or National Guard component).
- Determining Veteran Eligibility
 - The DD-214 is the required documentation to determine veteran status. If the veteran did not obtain a DD-214, a VA Summary of Benefits letter can be used to verify a service-connected disability (National Guard or Reserve).
 - You can provisionally enroll the veteran using the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) verification (formally known as the VA Medical Centers' Hospital Inquiry [HINQ]) and the Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES) to determine VA eligibility. Even if they are provisionally enrolled, a DD-214 must still be obtained.
- Determining Homelessness
 - When determining the veteran's homelessness status, HVRP uses the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition from the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition Housing Act (HEARTH) Act.
 - For any eligibility-related questions, grantees should discuss with their GOTR.
- Assessment and Intake
 - Assessing a veteran to identify if they are a good fit for HVRP is an ongoing and collaborative process that provides HVRP staff with important information such as the veteran's strengths, challenges, history, and potential needs. As HVRP grantees, you are constantly building rapport with the veteran and learning about their strengths and challenges. The assessment and intake process provides clear expectations and defines what HVRP is and is not.

- When assessing the veteran, focus on their abilities, interests, and strengths. Assess what potential barriers may be preventing the veteran from maintaining employment. Potential barriers may be skill-based, health-related, or situational, such as lacking transportation or having a history with the criminal justice system.
 - Make a list of what HVRP cannot provide and forge strong and lasting bonds with other providers to offer the veteran wrap-around service connections.
 - There are several assessment tools that providers can use to draw a clearer understanding of who the veteran is and what their needs are. O*NET Interest Profiler is one example of an assessment tool.
 - The assessment and intake do not have to be completed in one day, so take your time. Always ensure the veteran feels comfortable, understands the program, and does not feel rushed.
 - A release of information (ROI) is crucial when working with multiple agencies to ensure the information the veteran shares with you is kept confidential. The veteran and all parties involved need to discuss and sign the ROI. The information disclosed on the ROI needs to be explicitly chosen by the veteran and what they are comfortable sharing.
- **Skills for Job Searching and Placement**
 - Job Searching
 - When searching for employers who want to work with veterans, HVRP staff should understand the local labor market in the community your HVRP is serving. Building connections and strong relationships with employers who want to work with veterans is a great way to start creating a list of possible employers to pull from.
 - When assisting the veteran with their job search, there are a variety of helpful resources HVRP can provide, such as assistance with resume translation from military jargon to “civilian” language, mock interviews, identifying military-specific job boards, hiring events, or training opportunities. It is crucial to be clear and realistic with the veteran regarding what they should expect in the job market.
 - Individualize the job search for the veterans that you serve. Even though a position at the Target up the street is available, that may not be in the veteran's best interest. If the veteran is sincerely interested in the job, they are more likely to keep the job long-term.
- **Skills for Retention**
 - Retention
 - Retention is one of the key components of HVRP because there is more to helping the individual get a job; you must help them retain that position and continue building their skills. The goal is to set them up for success on

a career path and permanently end their experience of homelessness or being at risk of homelessness.

- Military service may have been the veteran's last job before HVRP. Reacclimating back into civilian life may be challenging for some people, and they may not know about helpful resources that are available.
- Retention strategies require the buy-in and support from the veteran, HVRP staff, and the employer; it takes a village!
 - An example of a retention strategy is being upfront with the employer about potential challenges if the veteran chooses to disclose them. Utilizing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other accommodations can help set expectations and help the employer make the changes that are needed.

- Follow-up

- After the veteran is employed, you are setting clear expectations with them about what your HVRP follow-up process will look like. The expectations should be shared with the veteran, employer, and community partners involved from the beginning.
- Find out what the employer is doing to retain their employees. Come up with a structure and retention plan with the employer and veteran to manage potential challenges the veteran may experience.

- **Discussion Questions**

- **What challenges have you experienced coordinating within your HVRP team?**

- **Response:** Coordinating with community partners has been a challenge. We have some strong partnerships, but other partners do not want to connect. Before we applied for HVRP, all the partners said they would help, and now they are not as interested.
 - **Suggestion:** Hosting events to draw in community partners is a great strategy to gain more partners.
 - **Suggestion:** It is a good strategy to look at what you can offer your partners so there is something in it for them. Doing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis on partnerships could be helpful.
- **Response:** We have an outreach coordinator, but we are having difficulty finding veterans for HVRP because they are more concerned with finding housing first.
 - **Suggestion:** This is an opportunity to rely on community partners such as Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), GPD, food resources, etc. Look at how you can incorporate relationships with housing providers into the HVRP case management process.

- **Resources**

- [HVRP Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

- [NVTAC Menu of Services](#)
- [Recruit Military](#)
- [Hire Heroes USA](#)
- Email: contact@nvtac.org
- Website: nvtac.org

Conclusion

For HVRP grantees, there are standards and helpful tips that can improve the implementation and service delivery to veterans. There are skills and strategies that HVRP grantees can learn and build upon, such as outreach to community partners, employers, and veterans. Other strategies that can help HVRP grantees are to develop helpful techniques for the eligibility, assessment, and intake process, such as taking your time going through the assessment process and partnering with other agencies on service coordination and having all parties sign an ROI. Job placement and retention are key elements of HVRP and are paramount to the success of the service delivery.

Throughout the remaining three VLC sessions, NVTAC will discuss skills for successful HVRP. Session two will cover an in-depth discussion of the tools and techniques for motivational interviewing throughout the HVRP process, session three will cover an overview of skills necessary to build and retain a successful HVRP team and develop ongoing partnerships, and the fourth and final session will cover an overview of requirements and skills for veteran training, job placements, and retention. HVRP grantees can request individualized TA for their program at any time by emailing contact@nvtac.org.

For more information, please visit www.nvtac.org.

You can review the presentation through the following link: [NVTAC VLC October 2023: HVRP Success Strategies](#).