

**National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC)
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Virtual Learning Courses (VLC)
Session 4 of 4: Veteran Training, Job Placement, and Retention
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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 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.
- **Veteran Training**
 - Overview
 - HVRP requires at least 80 percent of program participants to be enrolled in job-driven training (JDT). JDT targets hard employment skills for in-demand jobs based on labor market information and as described in the HVRP grantees' statements of need. Under HVRP, JDT includes subsidized apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT), retraining, upgrading, occupational skills training, and customizable skills training.
 - JDT can be provided in a classroom setting either on-site at your office, by a partner agency at their location through a referral, or virtually. In any format, it needs to meet the HVRP standard for training.
 - Soft skills such as life skills, resume writing, job searching skills, mock interviewing, and other soft skill activities are always important to the HVRP process, but they do not meet the requirements for JDT.
 - JDT solves three common challenges:
 - It assists employers who are struggling to find skilled workers to fill vacancies.
 - It helps solve the problem of training programs not always matching the skills required for in-demand jobs.
 - It helps to educate workers who might otherwise lack information about training resources.

- Tips for Implementation
 - Training programs need to be purpose-based – if the training will provide hard skills the veteran needs, will result in a license or certification at the completion of the training, or will in some other way assist that veteran in that chosen job.
 - The first job obtained through HVRP often does not perfectly match the veteran’s interests and goals. JDT can help develop the skills and experience for each veteran to pursue a career path. This is called career pathing.
 - JDT should always be aligned with the individual’s overall employment goal, and it is up to the case manager to ensure that employment is always brought back to the center of the conversation with the veteran through case management.
 - Leveraging partnerships with community partners can help increase success rates for finding training. Working partnerships with local colleges, employers, industry associations, and other community-based organizations are important for creating pathways to training opportunities. It takes a village.
 - Build a strong relationship with [American Job Centers \(AJC\)](#) to create a system of communication with them as well as other providers that you will need to leverage partnerships with. AJCs maintain an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) of training providers and have local labor market information and connections to local employers.
 - Just as it is important to build trust and rapport with HVRP veterans, it is also important to do so with our community partners. Operationalize the keys to effective partnering through respect and trust between HVRP and stakeholders.
 - Maintain the mutual understanding that all resources and wrap-around supports are essential to successful training outcomes and develop defined communication pathways between HVRP and stakeholders. It is important to take the lead in creating that communication system. Do not rely on the community partners to do it. Know the key points of contact and backup points of contact if someone is on vacation or out sick.
 - View employment as a key component for long-term housing stability and maintain an understanding in all stakeholder management efforts. Know the conversation points you want to bring up with each community partner based on that partner’s role within the community and your veterans’ needs, and talk about the benefits of the partnership with HVRP for that agency or the “what is in it for them.”

- Work with the GOTRs to help connect with [local AJCs](#) and other training resources and for assistance to determine if the training opportunities that are being considered meet HVRP JDT criteria.
 - Research virtual training courses that can meet the standards for being considered JDT, such as LinkedIn Learning or online certifications.
 - Utilize the [O*Net Crosswalk](#), which can help identify potential careers of interest for veterans based on their military branch and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). identify potential careers of interest for veterans based on their military branch and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).
 - Based on the individual’s interests, consider researching certification opportunities through the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website](#).
- Examples of JDT
 - To determine if training placements meet the HVRP standards, consult with your GOTR. Some examples of approved training include:
 - Commercial driver’s license (CDL) training for individuals interested in the transportation industry.
 - ServSafe test preparation and certification for veterans who desire to work in food service.
 - Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are industry-based opportunities that often result in direct hires by the training providers.
 - Community college certificate training programs that are based on local labor market needs and are strong community partners to have.
 - Microsoft Excel or Word training courses equip veterans with the skills necessary for many office-related career paths.
 - Tech support, software, or computer courses for veterans interested in Information Technology (IT).
 - Customer experience courses for veterans interested in customer service careers.
 - HVRP Training Requirements
 - As HVRP case managers, it is important to know what types of training are available, who the local partners are, and what relationships should be cultivated. Training resources include:
 - ETPL for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) scholarships could be available through the local AJC.
 - Investigate opportunities for assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training and Employment Programs (STEP) partners.

- Look into local training facilities for short-term training certifications.
- Consider community colleges for scholarships and pay for pre-screenings and referrals.
- LinkedIn training opportunities can be found that qualify for certain fields, depending on the participant's interests.
- Look for local OJT opportunities that are specific to the HVRP program's geographical area. Examples of companies that offer OJT include Harry and David and Dave's Killer Bread
- Some ideas for training that could be considered include:
 - Flagging Job Club training (one-day training) is a low-cost option and may have employment placement potential.
 - Security training for Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (PSST) for both armed and unarmed security (Oregon-specific).
 - Private Investigation is an option for some veterans.
 - CDL training is an excellent option for veterans who work better independently and without constant close supervision. Consider cost sharing for CDL training and paying for medical and driving tests.
 - Port of Entry Transportation Workers Identification Credential (TWIC) can be a fantastic option for military veterans, given the nature of their physical security training and attention to detail.
 - Some companies pay for training time after meeting initial screenings and job placements after completing training.
 - Community colleges offer short-term training opportunities for high-demand jobs such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) training, welding, and other skilled trades.
 - Asbestos training can allow individuals to get into good positions cleaning up asbestos safely and efficiently.
 - Other ideas include Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training online, Hazardous material (HAZMAT) training, bloodborne pathogen

training, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.

- Additional Resources
 - 2023 National Post-Award Conference (PAC) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [Day One](#), [Day Two](#), and [Day Three](#)
 - [HVRP Glossary of Terms](#)
- Discussion Questions
 - **Question:** What challenges have you experienced with identifying training opportunities?
 - **Response:** Follow-through and time commitment from participants.
 - **Response:** Finding funding or cost sharing.
 - **Response:** Identifying training that is useful for participants.
 - **Question:** What tips do you have to overcome these challenges?
 - **Response:** Be persistent about the necessity of training.
 - **Response:** Be clear and concise about the expectations for training for all participants from the point of enrollment.
 - **Response:** Develop goals from the start, including short-term training that can be achieved quickly, such as OSHA 10 and forklift safety.
 - **Response:** Help veterans research goals and better understand their motivation and employment goals.
- **Job Development**
 - [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
 - Understanding the ADA and informing veterans of their workplace rights benefit HVRP job development. As the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is being built with each veteran, learn about any accommodation needs they have and educate that individual about eligible rights.
 - The ADA is a federal civil rights law passed in 1990 that enables people living with disabilities to fully participate in all major life activities without discrimination. It also ensures that people living with disabilities have the same opportunities to pursue their life goals as everyone else.
 - The ADA requires employers, state and local governments, public and private transportation, public-serving businesses, and telecommunication companies to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
 - Workplace Accommodations
 - To get workplace accommodations and ADA protection, a person must meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - The person has a physical or mental health challenge that substantially limits the opportunity to work, be promoted, etc.

- The person has a history of living with a disability, even if it is currently in remission.
 - The person is seen by others as living with either a physical or mental health disability.
 - The person must self-disclose the need for accommodation at any time pre- or post-hire.
 - ADA: Employer Requirements
 - Employers with more than 15 employees must make reasonable accommodations for individuals who have disabilities that limit their performance.
 - A reasonable accommodation is any change made to the job role or work environment that ensures that people living with a disability can perform all essential job functions within the scope of that role.
 - If the worker’s disability is considered “hidden,” such as mental health challenges, the employer can request medical documentation to determine if accommodation is necessary.
 - The accommodation, however, must not create undue hardship for the employer. Reasonable accommodations are just that – reasonable.
 - ADA: Educating Veterans
 - From intake, the case manager is responsible for informing the veteran participant of all rights under the ADA and determining if any of that veteran’s physical or mental health challenges would impact their success in a job.
 - Discuss possible accommodations needed for job success with all veteran participants and empower veterans to ask employers for the accommodations they require.
 - Provide ongoing support to participants receiving ADA accommodations and protections and continue to champion the ADA both internally and externally.
- **Veteran Preparation and Employer Engagement**
 - Job Placement Process
 - Job placements entail making the best and most realistic match between your veterans’ skills, interests, and preferences in relation to your local employers’ needs and work environments. Through motivational interviewing (MI), the case manager can learn what the veteran participant wants and what motivates that veteran to work and attempt to increase the likelihood of that veteran gaining meaningful employment.
 - It may be quicker to want to chase down the easy placements, but it is important to remember that no match is 100 percent perfect, and matching the right job with the wrong employer will not result in career satisfaction for the veteran, nor will it result in the veteran retaining that position.

- There is much more to finding the best fit for a veteran than career interests and relevant skills. The case manager needs to help manage the participant’s expectations regarding employment, meaning that often, veterans’ expectations regarding the level of responsibility and pay that they will be able to obtain right out of the military are too high.
- Veteran job seekers have unique challenges, and intangible factors such as personality conflicts, culture issues, or perceived workplace hostilities could result in early attrition. However, it is important to help veterans understand their limitations based not only on their experience or the job market but also on their [physical limitations](#). If someone separates from the military as a combat medic with a severe back injury, it is not likely that health care would be the optimal career field for that individual due to the necessity to lift patients, regardless of their interests and employment goals.
- Finding the right fit includes looking for the salary, tasks, work culture, benefits, career advancement potential, and management style that meet the preferences of the veteran.
- Again, the fit might not be 100 percent perfect, but be patient and take the time to learn about the veteran and the employers in your area. You can better match the right candidates to the right positions if you understand the skills and strengths of the veteran participants and the needs of the employers.
- Job shadowing is a good way for veterans to experience an employer’s culture and understand common reasons for turnover from the employer’s perspective.
- Understanding what went “wrong” at previous jobs from the veterans’ perspective can provide the case manager valuable insight into making the most appropriate match between candidates and employers.
- Interview Preparation
 - The purpose of a resume is to obtain an interview, while the purpose of the interview is to communicate to an employer the benefits of hiring the interviewee. It is important to help your veterans be prepared when the time comes for an interview.
 - Appropriate interview attire is crucial to letting the employer see that the interviewee understands the dress code and how to present their best self. The attire will largely depend on the position – you do not show up for an interview for a construction worker position in a suit, just as you do not show up for a professional position in khaki pants and a polo shirt.
 - The setting of the interview is important to understand as well, such as how to interact with gatekeepers (learning how to introduce themselves to the office staff at arrival is vital), how to

behave in the waiting area, and even how to sit during the interview. Also, know how to get to the interview site by searching for primary and alternative routes in advance to ensure on-time arrival.

- Arriving early is important as well. For a lot of veterans, 5 minutes early is 10 minutes late, but there is a balance between arriving fashionably early and arriving too early. The veteran should arrive 10 minutes before the interview and be prepared for the interview to start as soon as they enter the company's parking area.
 - Mock interviews can help ease the job seeker's nerves. Help your veterans learn how to answer commonly asked interview questions and questions that are specific to the job role. By hearing themselves repeatedly talk about themselves and how they are the best fit for the position, they will answer common questions more smoothly and confidently. Reflect on answers given by the veteran and help improve responses through repetition. Doing more than one mock interview can help enhance skills, gain confidence, and reduce interview anxiety.
 - The only way to get good at interviewing, just as the only way to get good at anything, is to practice. Veterans talk about success in the context of team or unit success rather than individual success. Have them get accustomed to shifting the focus back upon themselves and discuss their own accomplishments. Get them past the "we" and focus on the "I" of success.
- Employer Engagement
 - Developing relationships with employers and understanding their needs and cultures is the first step in job development. This requires a certain level of selling skills. Selling skills are distinctly different from case management skills, requiring a business mindset and the confidence that you are helping the employers fill the hiring needs they have. This could involve cold calling. Having a template or a script can help keep the key points in focus and prevent conversation roadblocks from gatekeepers within the company.
 - Having expert knowledge of the local labor market, trends, and opportunities is essential to help focus employer outreach efforts in each given area of operation.
 - Develop an employer network. This means building a network of employers with whom you have established great relationships and who you can approach if you have a job seeker looking for a position that fits one of their roles. You can leverage established connections, whether personal, community, or board member connections, to understand the local employer landscape. If employers that have successfully hired HVRP

participants are part of the local chamber of commerce, ask them for introductions to other employers within the chamber and offer to present the resources your HVRP can provide to job seekers that other candidates outside of your program would not have. Invite employers to visit your agency, attend meetings, or volunteer for special events and further solidify and strengthen ongoing partnerships.

- Establish an internal job bank that references the skills and career goals of your HVRP participants to focus job development efforts.
- Other Tips:
 - Connect with employers with a large community presence and are open about hiring veterans.
 - Ask to visit local employers so HVRP case managers can learn more about the companies and the culture.
 - Ask for information about what jobs are currently available, and once a strong relationship is built, ask about getting advance notice about future openings.
 - Champion HVRP as a no-cost service that has an untapped labor pool with strong follow-up support services to help reduce attrition.
 - Inform employers about the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the benefits they get for hiring veterans.
 - Always sell the veterans' work strengths rather than focusing on their housing struggles.
 - Offer follow-up services and support to the employers as well as the job seeker, and always be confident that you are helping the employer hire motivated and skilled workers!
- Discussion Questions
 - **Question:** What challenges have you experienced developing employer partnerships and jobs?
 - **Response:** Veterans burning bridges through unacceptable behavior.
 - **Response:** Finding employers that are friendly to justice-involved backgrounds that pay well.
 - **Response:** Hiring managers who have misconceptions that veterans have mental or physical health issues.
 - **Response:** Veterans who do not understand their responsibility in the job-seeking process.
 - **Response:** Positions that start as part-time jobs when veterans need or want full-time employment.
 - **Response:** Trying to find employers that will hire someone with a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) conviction.
 - **Question:** What tips do you have to overcome these challenges?
 - **Response:** Look for higher wage-paying organizations.

- **Response:** Work with the veterans to build strong resumes.
 - **Response:** If a gatekeeper is causing communication issues, it can help to request an email contact for the hiring manager and reach out to that individual directly.
 - **Response:** Invest in more training resources and opportunities.
 - **Response:** Instruct veterans to always be honest on resumes and in interviews. Know the right way to be honest about justice-involved backgrounds.
 - **Response:** Help the veterans be patient and understand that good things take time.
- **Job Retention**
 - Job retention is the culmination of the HVRP experience for the veteran and the grantee that presents some unique challenges.
 - Job retention begins at outreach. HVRP retention documentation requirements should always be conveyed from the beginning of the enrollment process. The veterans should have a clear understanding of their responsibility to provide verifications of employment post-placement, and that must be communicated to them during their HVRP orientation and emphasized throughout the HVRP experience.
 - Post-placement service involves the veteran providing proof of employment so that you, the grantee, can share the success rate and better serve other veterans in the future. Communicate that it is a two-way service and express the team mentality to increase the likelihood that veterans will continue to engage post-placement.
 - Case management includes strategies to help promote program veterans' job retention. Some of these include:
 - Identifying and discussing potential and current stressors that may lead to job loss during case management.
 - Helping veterans remove or manage workplace stress by identifying action steps to take when coworkers, leadership, or tasks trigger them.
 - Seek to normalize workplace stress as common to everyone, not just veterans.
 - Action steps can involve a written guide, such as a self-care employment retention plan.
 - Engage all wrap-around supports to encourage job retention, such as housing case workers, therapists, family and friends, and community networks.
 - Proactively schedule and adhere to regular check-ins via phone or in-person meetings with employed veterans. This can do a lot to solidify with employed veterans that you are genuinely concerned

with their long-term success instead of just having them help you reach your program goals.

- Create an employed veteran peer support group. This can help them come together to become each other's cheerleaders, give support and praise for work-related successes, and help each other overcome challenges to retention.
- Follow up with employers to provide support and interventions to prevent job loss when you have the veteran's approval. If the veteran does not provide approval, listen for clues from the employer during conversations to identify when problems may exist with previously placed veterans. If employers excitedly ask for more referrals, that is a hint that things are going well with the placed veterans. However, if they are reluctant to consider more from your agency and will not fully engage, perhaps there is an issue, and there are more difficult conversations to be had with that employer to identify what interventions are needed and how to provide follow-up to both the employer and the veteran without violating any privacy barriers.
- Celebrate employed veterans by recognizing their achievements at agency events, on a "working wall," in HVRP marketing materials, etc. By praising placed veterans and showcasing their success, an HVRP program can indirectly motivate other participants to emulate that success.

Conclusion

HVRP grantees can learn and build upon veteran training, job placement, and retention skills through the case management process and building strong relationships with community employers. When approaching placements and retention expectations from initial outreach, HVRP case managers can establish a strong understanding among program participants regarding their roles and responsibilities for their own employment pathways. This can lead to increased percentages of placed veterans and more successful retention of highly valuable jobs for program participants.

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: Veteran Training, Job Placement, and Retention](#).