

**National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC)
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Virtual Learning Courses (VLC)
Session 2 of 4: Employment-Focused Outreach
April 30, 2024, 2 p.m. ET**

NVTAC Staff

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Key Points

- **Introduction**
 - NVTAC reminded attendees that HVRP best practices would be shared during this session. NVTAC encouraged all grant recipients to utilize best practices that may improve their service delivery. Before implementing a practice discussed during this session, grant recipients 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 grant recipients. To contact NVTAC or request TA, reach out to contact@nvtac.org.
- **Topic 1: Understanding Employment-Focused Outreach**
 - The three primary forms of outreach conducted by HVRP grant recipients are: enrollment-focused, resource-focused, and enrollment-focused.
 - Enrollment-focused outreach encompasses efforts focused on finding, engaging, and maintaining a network of employers in the service delivery area to place veterans in unsubsidized employment.
 - Identify and connect with employers that meet HVRP participants' needs.
 - Enhance the accessibility and community awareness of services.
 - Build lasting relationships with employers.
 - Meet employment-based performance indicators.
- **Topic 2: Importance of Employment-Focused Outreach**
 - HVRP grant recipients address veteran unemployment, veteran homelessness, and gaps in the labor market through employment-focused outreach efforts.
 - According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the veteran unemployment rate increased by 2.4 percent from 2023 to 2024 and disproportionately impacts marginalized veterans.
 - According to the Point in Time (PIT) count, veteran homelessness increased by 7.4 percent from 2022 to 2023.
 - According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (COC), labor force participation has decreased from its pre-pandemic levels.

- To address these challenges, HVRP grant recipients understand the needs of local employers, perform employer engagement, implement effective outreach, and empower veterans to secure good quality jobs.
- **Topic 3: Key Strategies and Methods**
 - Direct engagement
 - Hands-on communication with the employer, such as visiting the business in person, attending employment fairs to network, calling local employers to inquire about their hiring needs, and hosting an open house, networking event, or job fair and inviting local employers.
 - Engagement with secondary providers
 - Connecting with programs, groups, or agencies that represent the needs/interests of your target population, such as the COC, local business associations, community and economic development boards, etc.
 - Marketing/public awareness
 - Informing the community of your program, services, and benefits through marketing and branding efforts, such as utilizing social media, sharing or posting flyers, and engaging in strategic partnerships.
 - Before performing outreach, consider these tips and strategies:
 - Strategize with the target audience, message, timing, location, methods, and follow-up strategy in mind.
 - Research your local job market to determine growing or in-demand occupations.
 - Prepare all staff in contact with employers with a consistent set of outreach materials (elevator pitch, flyers, contact information, etc.)
 - Approach with a clear ask that does the work for the employer.
 - Understand the benefits of HVRP to employers and focus on how your organization can assist them.
 - Consider and plan for barriers to outreach.
 - Employers vary in openness to communicate and collaborate.
 - **Solution:** Gauge the openness of the employer before you present a veteran for consideration.
 - Veterans' personal preferences for advocacy
 - **Solution:** Research company policies on equity and past performance with special populations.
 - Stigma surrounding veteran status, homelessness, disability, and the need for case management.
 - **Solution:** Choose outreach language that is mindful of client privacy and avoids language that invites stigma.
- **Topic 4: Tools and Technologies of Modern Outreach**
 - Virtual outreach is cost-effective and great for reaching younger populations or those with disabilities.

- Virtual methods include email marketing, websites, social media, podcasts, webinars, blogs/forums, online surveys, virtual networking/career fairs, and more.
 - When creating virtual content, keep in mind:
 - A human-centered approach that values accessibility and tailored messaging;
 - The fit of the technology to the content type; and
 - A professionally produced message with good structure, grammar, and clarity.
 - Social media can be used to perform outreach by creating a presence online that raises awareness of HVRP.
 - Choose a platform that fits your needs. Curate a brand that is immediately recognizable across multiple settings and workers. Create content consistently.
- **Topic 5: Building Sustainable Employer Partnerships**
 - Focus on building partnerships with quality employers that: are veteran-friendly, provide benefits and support for employees, offer opportunities for advancement, give workers a voice on the job, represent prevalent industries, and employ veterans with barriers (i.e., criminal background).
 - Resources to identify high-quality employers include:
 - [The Good Jobs Initiative | U.S. Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#)
 - [National Labor Exchange Veterans Jobs](#)
 - [HIREVets Medallion](#)
 - To sustain employer partnerships:
 - Follow up regularly and consider scheduling check-in meetings.
 - Follow-through with employers from a veteran’s onboarding to retention.
 - Manage data on outreach to avoid duplication of efforts.
 - Become an asset to employers by finding your niche in the labor market.
- **Topic 6: Key Workforce Partners**
 - American Job Centers (AJC)
 - The AJC is a secondary provider that can connect your HVRP to a pool of employers also seeking assistance.
 - Benefits to employers:
 - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strives for an integrated, job-driven public workforce system that links talent to businesses.
 - Offer services such as providing workforce information, organizing job fairs, providing a place to conduct interviews, and more.
 - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
 - Offers many complementary programs to support a veteran’s employment goal and act as a secondary provider connected to employers.

- Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)
 - Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
 - Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO)
 - Veterans Employment Center (VEC)
 - Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
 - ◆ Community Employment Coordinator (CEC)
- **Discussion Questions**
 - **NVTAC Question:** In your opinion, what are the most significant challenges employers face in finding suitable candidates, and how can HVRP address these challenges?
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** Having adequate training for a specific role and, for employers in rural areas, having the transportation to get workers to their site.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** We have a lack of transportation, so we try to provide bus tickets and auto repairs when possible.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** HVRP assists employers in finding candidates to establish a one-on-one relationship.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** In our small rural area, working with local organizations has helped. We would use the VA hospital to transport veterans. Larger areas would require public transit.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** I work directly with an employer human resources (HR) generalist to reach out to local employees to provide a ride-share option.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** We have a relationship with the local transportation system that provides us with a number of bus tickets for our veterans who can use them for interviews and job searches up until the first paycheck is received.
 - **NVTAC Question:** What specific challenges does your organization face in reaching employers? What strategies have yielded the best results?
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** Our HVRP director created a spreadsheet of all the employers, which was very helpful since we had pre-established relationships with the director that were maintained.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** We do a weekly Teams meeting where a different employer speaks to our employment service partners.
 - **Grant Recipient Response:** Organized hiring events are the best way to promote these kinds of relationships since some employer HRs are hard to contact. Meet and greets gives you face-to-face contact to converse and provide an opportunity for mutual understanding.
 - **Grant Recipient Question:** Does CWT not count towards a placement for employment?
 - **NVTAC Response:** CWT does not count as an employment placement but can count as training. Training services for HVRP can be provided

through the local American Job Center, in-house, or through partners in the community, including CWT. Grant recipients should check with their GOTR for a final determination if they have questions about what qualifies as a valid employment placement.

Conclusion

Employment-focused outreach is necessary to achieve HVRP's primary purpose: reintegrating veterans into the labor force through placement into unsubsidized employment, which is vital to addressing veteran unemployment, homelessness, and gaps in the labor market. The primary methods for conducting employment-focused outreach are direct engagement, engagement with secondary providers, and the use of marketing/public awareness. Establishing and maintaining employer partnerships starts with identifying and engaging high-quality employers with tailored and concise messaging. Virtual outreach methods like social media can reach untapped populations and a wide audience. Employment-focused outreach efforts can also be aided through partnerships with key workforce partners like the AJC and VA.

Throughout the two remaining VLC sessions, NVTAC will discuss strategies to help veterans obtain and maintain meaningful employment. Session three will cover employer engagement and post-placement follow-up, and the fourth and final session will cover strategies to enhance veteran engagement.

HVRP grant recipients 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 HVRP Virtual Learning Course: Employment-Focused Outreach](#)