

**National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC)
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Community of Practice (CoP)
Outreach to Veterans
Thursday, February 27, 2025, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. ET**

NVTAC Staff

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Key Points

- **Introduction**
 - NVTAC staff introduced the topic and purpose of today's COP: strategies to more effectively conduct outreach to veterans. NVTAC reminded participants that any best practices shared during the training should be discussed with their Grant Officer's Technical Representative (GOTR) prior to implementation to ensure the activity is an allowable cost or whether it requires amendments to their grants.
- **Enrollment-Focused Outreach**
 - For HVRP grant recipients, effective outreach is necessary to achieve participant enrollment goals. Enrollment-focused outreach requires creating a strategic plan to engage and enroll veterans in your service delivery area (SDA) who meet eligibility requirements and would benefit from employment services.
- **How Can I Locate Eligible Veterans?**
 - Remember, to qualify for HVRP services, an individual must qualify for services as a veteran, based on their housing status as well, and would benefit from employment services.
 - For the individual to qualify for services based on their housing situation, the person must either be experiencing homelessness or be at risk of homelessness, participating in a qualifying partner service, or be transitioning out of certain institutions.
 - When working to locate individuals who qualify as "veterans," it is important to understand what resources you should partner with and what connections to establish. Some of those resources include offices within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and within Transition Assistance Programs (TAP).
 - VA resources include VA hospitals, Vet Centers, and more.
 - TAP programs include Reserve Component Transition Assistance Advisors and the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP).
 - The YRRP is a Department of Defense (DoD)-wide effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve component members, their families, and their communities, by connecting

them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. Post-deployment briefings are valuable events because the audience is comprised of military service members who have, usually, just returned from Title 10 orders, qualifying them for services under HVRP as veterans.

- Veterans come from a variety of backgrounds and exist in all spaces, not always associated with veteran services or connectivity. Seek veterans and their family members where all people can go for services, regardless of whether they have served in the military or not. Instead of asking “where do veterans go for services,” ask “where do people go for services?”
- When conducting outreach, encourage your community partners to screen for military affiliation, but do not assume that everyone that qualifies as a “veteran” will readily identify as such or even be aware that they can be considered a veteran. Instead of asking if someone is a veteran, consider asking “Have you or anyone in your immediate family ever served in the military?” This is good practice to engage with people who may not realize they qualify, may have family members who have served, and may result in you and your community partners capturing more qualified enrollments that may have otherwise fallen through the cracks.
- Also, look for organizations with a volunteer base, as some younger veterans may seek ways to stay engaged with something with purpose in their communities.
- While it is important to seek military-connected people everywhere, it is also important to remember that we must make connections with our veteran-specific organizations. Some of these partnerships and resources include:
 - National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO)
 - Veteran Service Organizations:
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
 - American Legion
 - Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
 - Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
 - Paralyzed Veterans of America
 - American Veterans (AMVETS)
 - Salvation Army
- Experiencing Homelessness
 - For veterans experiencing homelessness, there are multiple factors to consider. First, is the person at imminent risk of homelessness, or are they within 14 days of becoming homeless? Does the person live in a place not meant for permanent human habitation? Seek veterans experiencing homelessness at the following locations and resources:
 - Encampments
 - Public libraries and public transportation hubs
 - Emergency shelters and safe havens

- Domestic violence shelters
 - Warming centers
 - Soup kitchens and meal programs
 - Stand Down/Stand Up events
 - Transitional Housing, including VA Grant and Per Diem (GPD) programs, emergency shelters, and programs that offer hotel/motel resources
 - Continuums of Care (CoC)
 - CoCs are central points of entry into services for all individuals experiencing homelessness in the country, designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.
- At Risk of Homelessness
 - If someone is struggling with housing insecurity but they do not meet the requirements to qualify as homeless, is the person at risk of homelessness? For HVRP, to be considered eligible, a person must be 15-60 days from becoming homeless, be within 60 days of entering a situation of being housed (recently housed) or qualify based on income.
 - There are multiple resources available for HVRP staff to build relationships with to increase engagement with veterans who are at risk of homelessness.
 - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - HHS and its operating divisions offer a variety of resources and programs specifically designed to support military families. HHS also includes access to social welfare programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), energy assistance programs such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Medicaid, and other resources that may help reduce costs for very low-income individuals and families.
 - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - HUD includes Local Public Housing Authorities (PHA), which offers a housing choice voucher program that assists very low-income families, the elderly, and disabled people the ability to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market.
 - VA
 - The VA offers multiple programs that assist with homelessness and other services, such as Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV); however, it is important to

connect with other offices. Seek connections with personnel in the following areas:

- Substance Use Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
 - Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (DR RTP)
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program
- Also seek connections with local nonprofit organizations, legal aid groups, and other agencies.
 - Local nonprofit agencies include organizations such as the United Way, Goodwill, Catholic Charities, and more.
 - Food banks and pantries can share information with their service recipients.
 - Legal aid groups can assist with housing disputes, eviction defense, tenant rights, and more.
 - 2-1-1 provides information and referrals to callers on where to obtain assistance from local and national social service programs, local and national governmental agencies, and local and national non-profit organizations. Referrals are often given from databases accessed by call specialists.
 - Community Action Agencies, either grassroots in nature or developed by and with oversight provided by government agencies, can also be effective in building networks of service providers in your area.
 - Free and low-cost clinics, such as the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) can be good resources for outreach as well. These programs qualify for enhanced reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid as well as other benefits, offer sliding fee scales, and provide comprehensive services.
 - Participating in a Qualifying Partner Service
- Another way for veterans to qualify based on their housing situation is to be a recipient of services from a qualifying partner agency. These include:
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) or Tribal HUD-VASH
 - Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996
 - Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
 - Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
 - Homelessness Prevention

- Transitioning from Certain Institutions
 - The phrase “veteran transitioning from certain institutions” means an eligible veteran who:
 - Is a resident of a penal institution or an institution that provides long-term care for mental illness; and
 - Is at risk of homelessness absent referral and counseling services provided under the program.
 - Penal institutions mean federal, state, county, local, and city facilities that include:
 - Prisons
 - Correctional centers
 - Detention centers
 - Reentry centers
 - Penitentiaries
 - Jails
 - Build relationships with those resources that engage with people transitioning from these facilities to assist with housing, employment, legal aid and more.
 - Courts, probation/parole offices, vocational and educational programs, rehabilitation/treatment programs, legal aid clinics, expungement services, and halfway houses provide valuable services, and establishing relationships with staff within these resources can result in outside referrals and resources for your program participants.
 - Veterans’ Health Administration (VHA) has a Homeless Programs Office that includes the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program as well as the Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HVRV) services and resources.
 - Building relationships with your local Veterans’ Treatment Courts can help your participants that have legal trouble prior to entry into a situation of incarceration through interventions and alternatives specific to military veterans.
- In Need of or Would Benefit from Employment Services
 - If there are veterans that qualify based on their military service and their housing situation but do not need or would not benefit from employment services, they may not be a good fit for HVRP. However, there are VA programs that are dedicated to employment services for veterans that we can engage with to build two-way referral models. Some of these include:
 - Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)
 - Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
 - Formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
 - Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO)

- Veterans Employment Center (VEC)
 - Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)
 - Community Employment Coordinator (CEC)
- Other community resources that cater to the general population may also include services specific for military veterans and their families.
 - American Job Centers (AJC) are highly valuable community partners that can offer a wide range of engagement for HVRP staff.
 - Business Services Teams at the AJC include providers and employers in the AJC's service area to improve opportunities for job seekers.
 - Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff through the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) provide individualized career services to veterans with significant barriers to employment.
 - Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) through JVSG conduct outreach to employers and business associations and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring personnel to increase employment opportunities for veterans, especially disabled veterans.
 - Note: Not all AJCs have JVSG staff, so it is important to build relationships with the local Business Services Team, especially in the absence of JVSG personnel.
 - College/University career centers offer job placement services for individuals who complete programs at those institutions. Career services personnel build relationships with employers that actively seek out the skills that graduates receive and can be good partners to have when engaging with student veterans and recent graduates.
 - Vocational training centers and apprenticeship programs are good ways to help your veterans engage with job-driven training (JDT) and pathways to high-paying careers.
 - Day labor and temporary work agencies can assist veterans who need quick employment by getting in the door with employers, sometimes turning into permanent employment if the veteran is a good fit.
 - Nonprofit job training and employment placement programs, such as Goodwill, can provide occupational skills training, on-the-job training (OJT), intensive placement services sessions, and more.
 - The Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work program supports career development for people ages 18-63 who receive SSA disability benefits and want to work. Area Work Incentive Coordinators (AWIC) are experienced employment support experts located in each state who coordinate outreach

activities within their communities and partner with local organizations to administer the SSA's employment support services.

- **How Can I Connect with Veterans?**

- Outreach Strategies

- It is important to understand who we are trying to reach. Are we attempting to connect with aging veterans, recently separated veterans, or family members of veterans?
 - Make sure you have a clear message. What can you offer? Is the purpose of your message intended to provide information or to provide a call to action?
 - Knowing when the most advantageous times are to conduct outreach can be helpful. What are an agency's hours of operation and when is the best time to reach out to them to reduce the likelihood of interrupting their regular business during busy times?
 - Where will you conduct your outreach? Is it with an agency, with local shelters, or in the field at encampments?
 - How will you conduct your outreach? How will you identify employers with which to engage?
 - What follow-up services will you offer or provide to potential community partners, and how will you maintain those relationships?
 - Ensure that you are meeting veterans where they are physically and emotionally. Whether they are sheltered or unsheltered, be willing to engage with them where they are and engage with them using a non-threatening approach.
 - Use a variety of methods to spread awareness of your agency and services that you provide. In-person is always great; however, it is ok to use the phone, video chat, email, social media, and other forms of communication to reach veterans and potential community partners.
 - Connect with agencies that serve your target populations, such as veteran service organizations, shelters, food banks, and more.
 - Always provide consistent and high-quality services to those veterans that you serve. Dependability creates community trust and interest. Say what you do and do what you say.

- Outreach Methods

- There are three primary methods that you can use to conduct outreach. These are direct engagement, engagement with secondary providers, and through marketing or public awareness initiatives.
 - Direct engagement is hands-on, direct one-on-one communication with the veteran, such as:

- Performing street outreach at encampments
- Visiting emergency shelters to offer eligibility assessments and intakes on-site
- Maintaining a space at your local VA or AJC and advertising office hours for veterans to come and ask questions
- Attending community events intended for your target population, such as veteran resource fairs, Stand Down/Stand Up events, veteran hiring fairs, and more
- Hosting specialized events, such as networking opportunities, career fairs, or skill-building workshops and inviting veterans from partner agencies or through direct engagement
- Engagement with secondary providers involves connecting with programs, groups, or agencies that represent the needs and interests of (or connect with) your target population of veterans. This includes:
 - Establishing relationships with local GPD, SSVF, and HUD-VASH providers and creating a process for reciprocal referrals
 - Planning resource fairs with veteran service organizations
 - Joining local CoC meetings and presenting on your organization's services
 - Contacting resource directories used by homeless veterans in your community to inform them of the availability of HVRP
- Marketing and Public Awareness initiatives involve informing the community of your program, services, and benefits through a variety of marketing formats and branding efforts.
 - Utilize social media to increase your presence in key online environments.
 - Share flyers, infographics, success stories when appropriate, event information, and more to spread awareness of your HVRP.
 - Post flyers in locations frequented by the veterans you are attempting to reach, such as bus stations, post offices, libraries, community resource offices, and so on.
 - Engage in strategic partnerships with local, state, and federal organizations that can increase exposure to your agency and services.

- **Question**
 - What strategies does your HVRP utilize when doing outreach to veterans?
 - Response: Our agency attends Stand Down/Stand Up events to engage with veterans and other service providers.
 - We engage with the local National Guard units to spread awareness to service members and command personnel.
- **Leveraging Technology**
 - Resource Databases and Data
 - Are your programs and services known to popular databases and resource directories that are used by your target population to access assistance?
 - 2-1-1 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people to essential health and wellness services online or over the phone.
 - Unite Us is a platform that is offered in many states that connects government, healthcare, and community-based organizations for care coordination, data sharing, referrals, and more.
 - You can also look at your individual state's VA to see if they have databases at the state call-center level. As an example, the Michigan VA agency has a call center that provides connections to services for veterans and their families based on the different pillars of services.
 - Outreach in a Virtual World
 - There are countless ways to engage in today's virtual landscape to reach veterans, particularly in rural areas where veterans may not have the transportation to go meet providers in person.
 - Some methods of outreach in a virtual world include:
 - Email marketing
 - Website information
 - Social media
 - Podcasts
 - Webinars
 - Blogs or forums
 - Online surveys
 - Virtual networking and career fairs
 - Virtual peer support groups
 - Newsletters
 - Considerations for online content include:
 - Use a human-centered approach that tailors your messaging to your intended audience.
 - Ensure the technology and media fits the intended task.

- Use a professional approach using proper communication styles with sentence structure, proper grammar, and clarity of message.
- Social Media for Outreach
 - Social media is one of the most effective strategies to conduct outreach in today's increasingly technological society. The three things to consider are your objective, the methods you'll use, and the intended outcome.
 - The objective is to create a presence on social media that raises awareness of your HVRP's mission and services.
 - The methods you use involve platform options, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, and so on, creating a brand with a logo, tagline, and mission statement, and having content that introduces staff, recognizes employers, has newsletter content, provides public service announcements (PSA), and more.
 - The ultimate outcome of all of this is to become known and recognized in your community as a valuable service provider.

Conclusion

Outreach to engage with veterans, partner agencies, and employers within our communities should always be an ongoing effort. Ensuring we utilize the proper strategies, methods, and resources available to increase awareness of our program can result in drastic increases in external referrals, making your program that much more successful. For more information on outreach efforts, you can reach out to your GOTR or email nvtac@dol.gov to request one-on-one technical assistance for your program.

Resources

- [VA Vet Centers](#)
- [Reserve Component Transition Assistance | Military OneSource](#)
- [DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program – Official Site](#)
- [How Does HHS Support Military Families? | HHS.gov](#)
- [PHA Contact Information | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)
- [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\) | The Administration for Children and Families](#)
- [FQHCs and LALs by State](#)
- [About HRSA | HRSA](#)
- [Training and Work Opportunities at Goodwill® Career Centers – Goodwill Industries International](#)
- [Home | Choose Work! – Ticket to Work – Social Security](#)
- [Social Security Regional Contacts | Ticket to Work](#)

- [Veterans Community Action Teams](#)
- [Veteran Navigators](#)
- [National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center](#)

You can review the presentation recording here: [Will insert when available on YouTube]