

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program

Networking / Collaboration Strategies:
The Key to Leveraging Grant Resources

NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS
2009 Annual Conference and Membership Meeting

Presented by

Ken Fenner

U.S. Department of Labor
Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)

May 22, 2009



Introduction

- Definition and Goals
- Know Your Organization
- Group SWOT
- Requirements under the SGA
- Program Models
- Continuum of Care Definition
- Types of Support Services
- Critical Program Design Features
- Lessons Learned
- Questions & Answers

Definition and Goals

- The ***Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program*** (HVRP) provides services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment and stimulates the development of effective and comprehensive service delivery systems that address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.
- To be successful, HVRP grantees must integrate, manage, and leverage services and funding from many diverse sources and partners.
- Presentation is oriented toward grantee operational and logistical performance and compliance – those program activities that occur *after* the grant award.
- Intended to help improve the level of communication across administrative levels and among collaborative organizations within your local service area.

Know Your Organization

- Define Organizational Capabilities & Unique Provider Services
“Must know and be able to express why your solution and your organization provides the best service and value available”

- Develop a Strategic Plan
 - ✓ Identify all Potential Internal Resources
 - ✓ Know Your Organizations SWOT
 - ✓ Establish a Reasonable Expectation of Investment
 - ✓ Establish a Reasonable Time-line for Success

- Identify any “gaps” in the following” Networking / Collaboration Capabilities
 - ✓ “Grantee to Grantee” Relationships – Coordinate with GOTR/DVET
 - ✓ “Get to Know” Potential Sponsoring Organizations
 - ✓ Establish “Formal” Agreements with Complementary Providers and Agencies or Organizations
 - ✓ Identify Key Personnel to Build Organizational Creditability

Group SWOT

- Conduct Group SWOT Analysis
 - ✓ Strengths
 - ✓ Weaknesses
 - ✓ Opportunities
 - ✓ Threats

Requirements under the SGA

The SGA guidance provides general criteria for grantee organizations to address within their HVRP program design. The specific guidance related to networking / collaboration is summarized and expanded upon as follows:

- Successful programs will design and implement **effective outreach processes** that identify and assist eligible veterans to enter into the HVRP by disseminating information to and receiving referrals **from many different service providers and veteran service organizations;**
- Successful programs will be expected to **provide and coordinate comprehensive services through a case management approach** that networks and collaborates with Federal, State, and local resources to address the complex problems facing homeless veterans;
- Successful programs will have clear strategies for improving the employment and retention (follow up) of employment for homeless veterans, **especially incorporating local DVOP / LVER personnel** whenever possible to leverage existing locally based USDOL and VETS resources; and
- Successful programs will establish clear **job readiness determination strategies.**

Program Models

- Grantees should develop an “accountable” lead agency mentality.
- Grantees must implement an integrated and collaborative case management based service deliver approach to providing care to homeless veterans that is tailored to the local and regional conditions.
- Past and current grantees have demonstrated varied and successful service models that involve different degrees of co-location of these supportive services and networks – ranging from the “one-stop-services” mall concept which provide a majority of support services under one roof - to a more referral dependent model that relies on a number of organizations from different physical locations brought together by the common mission to assist homeless veterans.
- Regardless of program design differences, it is the grantees **ability to coordinate and manage an effective “continuum of care” type service delivery** for their homeless veteran participants over an extended time period – even beyond the performance time periods specified under the HVRP grant – that significantly impacts HVRP long-term success.

Continuum of Care Definition

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), who first put forth the “Continuum of Care” definition, which the HVRP adopted to illustrate the requirement for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to serving homeless veterans is defined as follows:

“A Continuum of Care Plan is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and support services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.”

Key results of the plan include:

- Entrance into permanent and sustained long-term housing (HUD Emphasis).
- Sustained long-term and strategic service intervention.
- Assessment of individual’s capacity to identify service “gaps”to tailor integrated solutions.
- Identify common goals and increase community “buy-in” and access to mainstream resources.
- Obtaining meaningful employment or training with the assumption that sustained employment will lead to a permanent (and non-supported) housing condition (HVRP Emphasis).
- Job readiness determination plan.

Types of Support Services

The VETS National Office is responsible for providing programmatic guidance to grantees, and the GOTRs assigned to assist them, about building and maintaining effective networks and a process of effective on-going collaboration.

While many of the networking activities involve specific **outreach** components, the process of collaboration must integrate effective support services that may take the form of any or all of the following:

- Housing referrals and assistance.
- Out-stationed personnel or staff from other public service agencies.
- Sharing of information systems, data, and reporting mechanisms.
- Facilitating substance abuse treatment and recovery programs and / or
- Establishing a referral and management processes to ensure that participant's receive an adequate level of physical and mental health care.

In all instances, maintaining and updating detailed case file records and facilitating meaningful and regular communication channels among all service providers involved is critical to grantee success.

Critical Program Design Features

- As mentioned, grantees must implement a comprehensive case management “Continuum of Care” model that incorporates a broad spectrum of “case management” driven service providers is required with long-term retention and follow up services ;
- Grantees must implement and demonstrate on-going relationships through either formal or informal collaborative agreements;
- Grantees are strongly encouraged to incorporate local DVOPs / LVERs and work with your DVET/GOTR for collaborative assistance;
- Grantees must establish outreach activities that target agencies and organizations who assist homeless veterans;
- Grantees are strongly encouraged to plan, administer, and/or actively participate in Stand Down events as a part of an effective outreach and networking activity;
- Grantees are **required** to perform a preliminary assessment of each participant’s eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) service connected disability, compensation, and/or pension benefits; and
- Grantees should implement a job readiness determination plan related to enrollment.

Lessons Learned

- Implementing effective collaboration strategies enhances the overall “quality of service” - view other HVRP grantees located in your area as allies, not competitors – Coordinate w/GOTR/DVET.
- Implementing supplemental supportive services is critical to overall success – the small things sometimes make the biggest difference.
- Hire experienced and qualified social service professionals along with capable and formally homeless veterans.
- Motivate all staff to play a role in building effective partnerships and follow up.
- Integrate DVOP / LVER personnel into HVRP grantee service delivery strategies.
- Commit to regular meeting schedules or formal communication and service procedures between critical partners via formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs).
- Pursue diversified - public and private - sources of funding to secure future opportunities to reduce or eliminate service delivery “gaps” and interruptions of service.

Questions and Answers

- Please come forward with any issues or questions and answers.

For additional Information Contact:

Ken Fenner

U.S. DOL / VETS

(202)693-4728

Fenner.Kenneth@dol.gov

or

Mike Palumbo

VETS Support Contractor (MSTI)

(443)562-8907

mjpalumbo3@yahoo.com