

At Your Service**Snapshot of Service****Plugging In: Social Media and Technology**

Technology is everywhere – Communication through email, text messaging, and social media have become commonplace. Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees often use technology to improve engagement with the veterans they serve. Many homeless veterans served through HVRP lack either access to technology, adequate skills, or both, yet harnessing technology will provide these veterans with the tools necessary to participate and succeed in today's competitive workforce.

In Houston, HVRP grantee Career and Recovery Resources, Inc. incorporates technology into the client assessment process in three ways: 1) each client agrees to contact the agency at least once every two weeks by phone or email; 2) each client receives his/her own email address; and 3) the agency provides free computer classes. Due to their homeless status, many clients lack reliable means of communication. The inclusion of technology in the intake process promotes better communication between clients, their case managers, and potential employers.

The Albany Housing Coalition uses social media and technology in its initial outreach efforts and to maintain contact with clients. Lee Vartigian has found using social media like Facebook to be very successful, especially for connecting with younger veterans. Social media can also be used to connect veterans to each other, to job opportunities, and to potential employers.

Technology can be intimidating for those veterans who lack exposure and skills. Linda Chase at Easter Seals Oregon provides support and training through face-to-face meetings, support groups, and access to technology to ensure these veterans have the skills required to find employment.

For homeless veterans seeking employment, technology can represent both a challenge and an opportunity. Providing access to and training in technology is one more way HVRP grantees ensure homeless veterans are ready for today's job market. ***HVRP grantees help veterans stay plugged in to the world of work through technology.***