

At Your Service**Snapshot of Service****Assessments and IEPs: Tools that Lead to Careers**

Skill translation can be a challenging task for veterans who are homeless, especially if they have been out of the labor force for many years. According to Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees, these veterans often perceive their military service as a positive part of their overall history, but not necessarily a useful part of their work history to be included on their resume. Others are proud to include their military service, but do not realize that civilian employers may have trouble identifying the transferable skills. HVRP grantees are challenged to conduct comprehensive assessments, translate skills, and then help veterans find employment opportunities that maximize their potential to build from their military and civilian work histories.

Tammy Bellofatto from the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) uses DOL's O*NET as part of the intake process with every client. O*NET, a product of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, is a comprehensive career exploration tool that provides detailed occupational descriptions. My Next Move for Veterans within the O*NET can help veterans translate military experience into civilian skills.

Combining O*NET with a comprehensive Individual Employment Plan (IEP), Ms. Bellofatto helps each veteran identify his/her dream job and creates a framework for obtaining it. She uses the Stepping Stones principle of job-driven training to help clients understand how taking a starter job now can lead to new skills, training opportunities, and chances for promotion, eventually leading them to their dream job.

In New York City, the Jericho Project encourages clients to focus on the set of skills they want to use in employment as opposed to the job title they want. As Kevin Driscoll explains, the approach focuses on client identification and, if necessary, acquisition of a skill set that acknowledges his/her interests, abilities, and background and is relevant to a number of professions and industries. In his experience, clients are more likely to succeed when they choose employment based on what they like. To help in the process, Jericho staff use O*NET and other tools to guide clients towards opportunities that match their interests.

Through the use of assessment tools and occupational resources such as O*NET, service providers can help homeless veterans translate their military training and experience into tangible skills leading to productive careers in the civilian workforce. ***Through solid assessment and cooperative planning, homeless veterans and their partners at HVRP can change a job into a career.***