



**NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS**

***At Your Service***

**HVRP Grantee Best Practices**

## **Outreach and Enrollment Strategies – Eligibility Education**

Education is an important element to the success of any federal program, especially when consumers and service providers alike may not fully grasp program goals or expected outcomes.

As Dana Niemela of Denver Department of Human Services explained, “People on the outside who are referring individuals to us or even the veterans themselves don’t understand what the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program is. In the absence of a really brilliant marketing and branding strategy, [...] is the extensive outreach to other service providers.” She recommended that when introducing the program to others that you should avoid getting into too many details. Focusing on the big picture of its goals is most important.

Niemela also found that by educating her partners on the goals of her program that she’s seen, “[...] a dramatic shift in who’s coming in the door for services, [...] they’re more employment-ready when they get here. They may not have a perfect resume, but they’ve at least thought about it as opposed to the ones who were coming in and going, ‘What is this? We don’t really know.’” A great deal of confusion can be avoided if an HVRP distributes information about its program offerings throughout the community.

For Barbara Ousley of Salvation Army Bell Shelter, another challenge faced by her program is homelessness and veteran certification. She claimed, “Once we got the fast track to getting [a] DD-214, we could determine their eligibility as a veteran.” Homelessness certification was also discussed by Bill Darnell of Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries, who said, “In Hamilton County, we have a certificate process that other counties that we serve in our grant [don’t] use.” He added, “Our HMIS system that we use in Cincinnati color codes—makes it really easy—to see who has been in the system and would meet the definition of chronically homeless.”