



**NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS**

***At Your Service***

**HVRP Grantee Best Practices**

## **Preparing for Job-Driven Training**

Once an HVRP has successfully conducted outreach and assessment, it is time to focus on job readiness and training for veteran clients. While there are a variety of approaches, many grantees have found that focusing training in areas such as technology and interpersonal skills was very successful.

Each client who enters an employment program may be at a different stage of job readiness. Assessing what level of readiness and what skills a client has is important for lasting job placement. Doreen Straka of Jericho Project uses a homework assignment, and “that’s been able to let us assess a lot of their abilities to follow through and then how much work we’re going to need to give them and type of assistance we might need to give them” in order to achieve job search success.

Darryl Harper of Career and Recovery Services said that his organization conducts a screening, including background checks and chemical dependency, before a veteran begins seeking employment.

Dana Niemela of Denver Department of Human Services noted that many clients may lack computer skills, identifying a segment of the veteran population as being “an older workforce often who have been working in the trade industry.” Applicants without such skills who attempt to join an increasingly technology-driven workforce will be disadvantaged applicants. Niemela championed her program’s interaction with American Job Centers (AJCs), which can review computer fundamentals with veterans.

Successful HVRPs know that the way consumers present themselves in person is as important as how they appear on paper. Niemela identified soft skills as an area of focus when she prepares her veteran clients for gainful employment. She teaches veterans about professional behavior in the workplace, including the need for punctuality and an appropriate attitude. Having an effective resume and positive interview are other important aspects. Niemela said, “A lot of the individuals who are using our employment services have criminal justice involvement and need to know how to address those questions in an interview process.”

Group orientations provide a peer-to-peer network that can calm nerves and help veterans open up according to Niemala. “You could feel the energy increase in the room as people [discussed] their successes and their failures and they felt camaraderie with one another and felt more comfortable talking about some of the challenges that they were facing.”