Employment for Homeless Veterans in Non-Urban Areas

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Best Practices Teleconference
March 29, 2012
What is HVRP?

The purpose of the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) is:

- To provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and;

- To stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.
Who are the HVRP Grantees?

- Established service providers
- Conscious of and responsive to veteran needs
- Often recipients of other grants
- Participate in Stand Downs
- Provide what they can in-house, but also use MOUs
- Know how to do more with less
- Success tied to housing
- Urban or non-urban
What Are the Best Practices?
Training and Employment

- Effective Program Start-Up
  - Staffing plans in place
  - Established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)
  - Targeted outreach plan

- Training
  - Individualized Employment Plan (IEP)
  - Career counseling
  - Community college courses and specialized programs
  - Resume writing assistance, mock interviews, Motivational Interviewing
  - Connection to CWT through VA

- Placement
  - Connection to DVOP/LVER
  - OJT’s, Connection to local employers
  - O*NET and local labor market knowledge

- Retention
  - Incentives
  - Alumni Networks
  - Newsletters
Supportive Services

- Domestic violence counseling
- Dental care
- PTSD, MST support groups
- Prescription monitoring
- Savings accounts
- Cell phones
- Child care
- Financial literacy counseling
- Connection to VA and other benefits
Connection to Housing

- Emergency, transitional, and permanent housing
- Furniture
- Security and utility deposits
- Leveraging SSVF
Addressing Legal Barriers

- Putting “Incarcerated Veterans Guides” into practice
- Discharge upgrades
- Interview/application assistance
- Stand Down and Homeless Court
- Veterans Treatment Courts
- Veteran Justice Outreach Program Liaisons at the VAMC
- Child support interventions
Collaborating to Avoid Redundancy

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants: DVOPS/LVERS
- Higher education institutions
- Faith-based resources
- Coalitions and Alliances
- Shelters
Non-Urban Programs

- Population less than 569,463
- Minimum award of $100,000 to maximum award of $200,000 for Non-Urban grants
Trends and Barriers: Non-Urban Areas

- **Demographics:**
  - 1/3 of OIF/OEF veterans return to “rural” or “highly rural” areas
  - Larger percentage of non-urban veterans from Vietnam and Persian Gulf era

- **Access to services:**
  - Less frequent use of VA services
  - Less access to community mental health services
  - Increased stigma of service utilization

- **Employment:**
  - Higher and more prolonged unemployment
  - Less access to public transportation services
  - Low-skill/seasonal job prevalence
Meeting Needs through HVRP: Goodwill Industries of the Heartland
Paulette Risden-Rice, MBA

Goodwill of the Heartland

HVRP Best Practices

2012
Difficulties @ Start-Up

- Staff turnover/training
- Finding clients
- Partnerships
- Dedicated staff
- Flexibility
- Files
- Reporting/TPR
- Discipline with client problems/issues
HVRP Before

- Low enrollment #’s
- One partnership
- Disappearing veterans
- Program abuse/manipulation
- No extra-curricular activities for veteran clients
- Limited store staff cooperation
HVRP Now

- Never a problem meeting enrollment goals
- Many partnerships
- No problems with attendance at veteran program activities
- Set Standards/rules
- Group sessions, mentor sessions, regular class sessions, fitness class
- Acceptance in our stores
Employment Training

- Immediate employment in local GW stores
- Part-time job coach to assist during shifts
- Veterans are trained in all facets of retail
- Deal with attendance, co-worker disagreements, attending to task, etc.
- Customer service aspect
- Opportunities for permanent hire
Keys to Success

- Find a mentor or model agency to ask questions and seek guidance
- Develop positive partnerships which lead to a high number of referrals
- Flexibility. Be ready to change directions when needed
- Hold the veterans accountable
- Think outside the box
HVRP Integrated Components

- Supportive Unemployment class once per week
- Encourage and monitor maintenance of health status
- Require veterans to apply to 4 jobs per week
- Weekly meetings with Employment Specialist to edit resume and job search
- Weekly support groups that address other psychosocial needs
- Training experience in a Goodwill retail store 12 hours per week
- Mentor Program
Meeting Needs through HVRP: Veterans Inc.
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