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Job-Driven Training in HVVRP

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The NCHV TA Center team is here to assist you as you shift and adapt your programs to meet the principles and requirements of job-driven training. This guide will provide you with a background on the development of job-driven training and strategies for identifying and implementing job-driven principles in your HVRP.

What is Job-Driven Training?

Job-Driven Training is defined as:

“Training that is responsive to the needs of employers in order to effectively place ready-to-work Americans in jobs that are available now or train them in the skills needed for better jobs.” (from “FACT SHEET: Ready to Work At a Glance: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity,” see Additional Resources at the end of this guide).

What Motivated This Change?

In his 2014 State of the Union Address, President Obama requested that the Vice President lead a review of federal training programs in order to identify and implement steps to make these programs more “job-driven.” A January 2014 Presidential Memorandum provided the Vice President and his partners at various Agencies, including the Department of Labor, with 180 days to create an implementable action plan.

To assist programs in developing, connecting to, and tracking their job-driven training activities, the Vice President released *Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity*. A link to this report is located in the resources at the end of this guide.



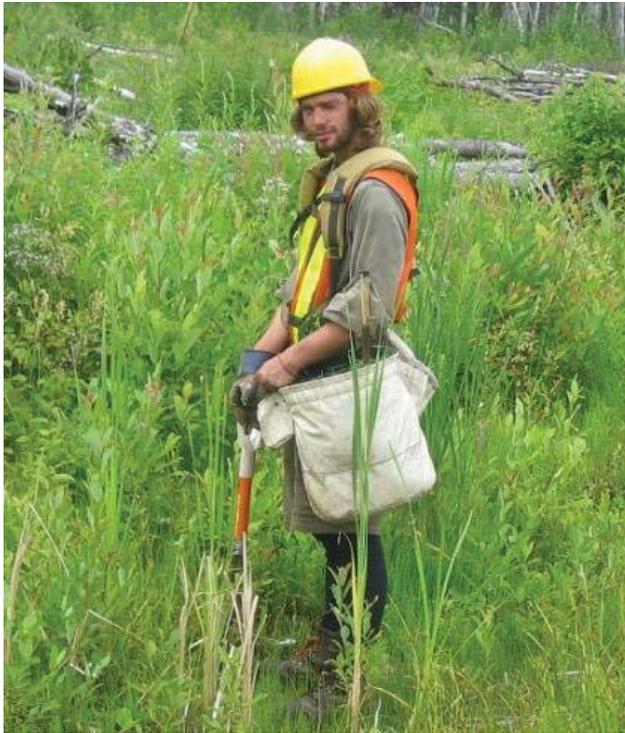
In compiling *Ready to Work*, the Vice President’s team spoke to large and small employers, as well as county, local, and Federal officials. They met with economists, union leaders, job centers, and leaders of community colleges. Governors and Mayors offered input. In addition, they addressed individuals experiencing long-term unemployment to give voice to their needs and concerns.

The resulting report, *Ready to Work*, provides examples of job-driven training and placement approaches from across the employment services spectrum. HVRP is specifically mentioned within this report as a federally funded grant program that has aggressively pursued integration of job-driven training principles.

The majority of those impacted by the implementation of job-driven training are individuals who will not come in contact with HVRP programs. However, many veterans may be more vulnerable to homelessness than you think. For some veterans, predatory lending and education institutions can transform the sweet promise of the GI Bill into the bitter reality of tuition loan debt, non-accredited degrees, and stifled hope. For long-term unemployed veterans, a return to work in a tech-savvy age is intimidating and overwhelming. For these and other veterans, failures of the labor market compound income instability and increase risk of homelessness. A successful job-driven approach in the programs they access can mean the difference between sheltered and in the shelter.

In 2013, employers spent \$450 billion on training activities, far outpacing the Federal government’s investment of over \$17 billion. These training activities include several potential access points for job seekers, including recruiting, hiring, job fairs, and partnerships with local workforce agencies. Successful execution of job-driven

training principles will require that Federal employment programs, including HVRP, use these access points to connect to employers.



Impacts on Employers, Training Providers, and Workers

According to *Ready to Work*, job-driven training impacts three main audiences within the labor market: employers, training providers, and unemployed workers. Each of these three audiences has unique skills to be leveraged by the market and specific barriers to successful execution of their goals. Connecting these skills and alleviating these barriers can lead to a successful recovery of the labor market.

Here is more information about each of the three audiences:

Employers: Employers are seeking employees for open positions, but are often unable to find qualified candidates for these positions. As of June 2014, 4.7 million employment opportunities existed in the open labor market, up from 4 million at the same point in 2013. These employers are confronting the reality that available workers might not have the right skills and training to match the jobs they have open.

Assisting Employers: Your HVRP program is a critical linking point between these employers seeking trained, qualified candidates and the homeless veterans committed to employment!

Training Providers: Training and education providers create structured training curriculums, but the end product (degree, certificate, license) often does not match the specific needs of individual employers in the area. Whenever possible, the training should be on the job site, through mechanisms like On the Job Training (OJT) or Registered Apprenticeship. People in Registered Apprenticeships earn, on average, \$7,000 more annually after six years of a return to employment.

Being a Training Provider: Agencies providing employment placement and retention services, like HVRP, should have access to the resources that support these job site training tools!

Unemployed Workers: People seeking employment, especially those who are long-term unemployed, are often uninformed about open positions and training opportunities. They may not know where to start or even how to apply. They may be reticent to pursue training, although individuals who pursue training with significant employer involvement earn, on average, an additional \$4,500 per year.

Supporting Unemployed Workers: HVRP grantees are often the first access point for a veteran seeking help, often after long periods of disconnection from services. You have the opportunity to serve as an information resource and an advocate. Use these resources to make sure veterans in your program make informed choices about training, education, and employment.

How Do We Implement Job-Driven Training?

To coordinate across 25 programs, the White House developed a seven component checklist of job-driven activities. This section walks through the seven major components of job-driven training as outlined by *Ready to Work*, shows how these components reflect some of the work you are already doing, and suggests activities you can pursue moving forward.

Principle One: Engage with Employers

According to *Ready to Work*, engaging with employers means programs should “work up-front with employers to determine local or regional hiring needs and design training programs that are responsive to those needs” with a goal of more successfully connecting trainees to available positions.

As HVRP grantees, you are likely already engaged significantly with local employers. Often, these employers call you when they have positions available. You may have a close relationship with your American Job Center (AJC), and the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) acts as your liaison with employers. Check out the resources at the end of this guide for links to your local AJC. You know that your grant requires that 80% of the veterans enrolled go through training. You already develop training that addresses the skill gaps identified in your early assessment and IEP development.

You can take several steps to implement this principle gradually based on where you are. Start by identifying a clear next step for engaging employers, conduits to employers, and veterans interested in training. These processes can take time to develop; start now!

First, identify a step for better engaging with employers directly. You may consider engaging with employers that have established training programs that can be adapted to meet the needs and skills of the veterans you serve. Often, a third party will provide the training and the employer will commit to hiring individuals with the resulting certification. This relationship exists for jobs in security, driving, food service, forklift operation, and others. You can ask for commitments from the employer to provide training and needed tools to veterans who commit to training, even if a firm commitment to hire is not feasible for the employer.



Several conduits to employers exist, including the LVER at your American Job Center (AJC). The Chamber of Commerce can be a resource, especially if they host a Hiring Our Heroes hiring event. Your Mayor’s Office of Veteran Services may also be an access point to these employers, especially if the Mayor in your city has signed onto the First Lady’s Mayor’s Initiative

(more details at the end of this report). Engage with your local community college; they may be receiving funding through Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAAACCT) to connect their certificate programs to in-demand jobs!

To prepare veterans, you can make a commitment to completing training part of your early discussions and service contract. Some community colleges offer introductory level courses at no cost. The veteran can take one course toward the certification before deciding whether or not to commit his time, and possibly his GI Bill, to this training.

Principle Two: Earn and Learn

“Earn and Learn” means that individuals should receive training that is outside the classroom and in the workplace. In addition, they should receive a livable wage for their training. Some examples include paid internships, pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships (RA), and on-the-job training (OJT).



HVRP grantees cannot pay participant wages through OJT, but you can pay employers for reasonable costs of training. HVRP defines OJT as follows: *OJT means training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that: (a) provides knowledge or skill essential to the full and adequate performance of the job; (b) provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant, as appropriate. Usually in the OJT agreement, there is a promise on the part of the*

employer to hire the trainee upon successful completion of the training (from DOL-VETS Glossary of Terms).

This definition means you can use HVRP funds to support training costs that result in OJT, but you have limited training dollars in your budgets. One OJT for one veteran may take up your entire training budget. OJT costs are better supported elsewhere. Some employers will pay for OJT if the veteran agrees to work for the company for a period of time, usually one year. Ask other grantees how they have developed successful OJT opportunities through the HVRP Community of Practice calls on the first Wednesday of every month.

You can take some steps now to begin exploring OJT, RA, and other earn and learn opportunities. Engage with your AJC to find out which employers offer on-site training before hiring. Ask the AJC for a list of approved training providers, and look into the available apprenticeships for timelines (many are longer than your HVRP Program Year) and application processes. If you are not already, you should be connected to the implementing agency for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the senior training program that places individuals over 55 into workplaces throughout the community.

Principle Three: Use the Data

The third principle of job driven training asks that employment and training programs use data to drive accountability and inform employer engagement strategies. Comprehensive and accessible labor market data can facilitate two important processes: this data can drive your employer outreach, and it can inform consumers on real opportunities.

As an employment and training program, HVRP is already connected to labor market data. You are likely already using several forms of labor market information, even if you do not realize it! Knowing the projected growth of certain sectors may already inform how you reach out to local employers. You have likely helped many veterans translate their skills from the military to civilian language for resumes. Placement success requires that you know about the jobs that are currently available and what tasks those jobs involve. Strong retention in employment requires that you know the skills necessary to be successful in a job before sending a veteran to an interview.

Available and relatively simple data analysis tools can help you maintain a client-centered service model while still integrating job-driven training. The O*NET has a wealth of information connecting labor market information to every occupation in the country. MyNextMove for Veterans, also by the Department of Labor and available through the O*NET, has a useful skills translator. The O*NET also includes a free, online, easy to use interest assessment that links directly to available jobs in your area. This assessment tool helps making a direct connection between the individual veteran in your office and labor-market informed employment opportunities in your community.

Most AJCs create an annual or monthly employment report that shows local or state-level job growth.

You may wonder, what kind of data should we be collecting to show we are informed by the labor market? Using these tools, you can identify jobs that are currently available, the specific job tasks and skill requirements for those jobs, and the potential for growth in the region. Utilize your partners and your own agency's expertise to identify supplementary sources of data that are likewise critical to employment success. This data includes military-civilian skill translation or workplace accommodation for disabling conditions experienced by veterans in your program. Being informed of this information before sending a veteran in for an interview can impact his potential for success. Talk to your local Easter Seals affiliate or the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation for your state (note: the name differs by state). You can also find accommodation information by using the Job Accommodation Network (JAN).



Principle Four: Measure Results

The fourth principle of job-driven training states that programs should measure and evaluate the employment outcomes of participants to assess the quality of training programs. Having this information, the report states, allows training providers and job seekers to make informed choices about the training they choose.

As an HVRP grantee that reports your results in VOPAR every quarter, measuring and reporting results is not new to you! Much of the suggested data points are already captured within your reporting requirements for DOL-VETS. If you also report into HMIS, you capture a full spectrum of service and training results. Currently, you report on the individual and programmatic levels to show your program's outcomes compared to anticipated deliverables. You measure wages, numbers of placements, and retention.

To expand your organization's adherence to job-drive training principles, you may consider expanding the scope of the data you report using the results you already have. Instead of limiting your data reporting to individual results and aggregate programs, you can also break your data down by employer and sector. How many of the veterans you placed are with one specific employer, or with one industry? How long is the retention average for that employer? Do veterans placed in healthcare fields stay employed longer than veterans placed in food service jobs? These are questions you can likely answer with the data you have.

Other questions are similarly important, but may not be captured in your current data collection. You may know how many veterans received training, but do you know on average how long after training they are hired? Do you know how many went on to other jobs within their training field? These questions may not be answerable now with your current data collection, but are important ways to be thinking as you move into future program years.

These outcome measures help you show that your HVRP is not only placing veterans in jobs and helping them stay in those jobs, but also that you are targeting veterans to successful training programs that rapidly move participants into employment with growth potential. Again, this process takes time, and we know your time is

limited. Do you need new data collection tools to track this information? Ask us... we can help!

Principle Five: Stepping Stones

The fifth principle of job-driven training requires that employment placement show a stepping stone approach to success. In practice, this means a training process shows a progression and advancement, with integration of training and education activities as needed.

As an HVRP grantee, you already document these stepping stones! Your IEP is your record of progressive service delivery resulting in employment placement. Ideally, it includes up to three long-term goals to be completed in the Program Year, with specific steps to achieve those goals. These steps should be informed by S.M.A.R.T. principles and include basic life skills training, employment training, and supportive services. This plan should also be updated throughout the year to reflect the veteran's progress and changing service needs.

As you work through your organization's IEP process, you may consider strategies for aligning IEPs with Housing Stability Plans of a co-located or partner SSVF grantee. You can also brainstorm on including supportive services and training resources that may normally be left out of the IEP, like SCSEP, state vocational rehabilitation, VR&E and CWT through the VA, or registered apprenticeship.

You may feel pressure to include all of these training and supportive service elements in a working, useful IEP that does more than sit in a client's folder. Aim to set out a clear menu of possible steps and goals that you can choose from based on the resources you have. This menu looks different in every area... we can work with you to develop your list. Do you need some assistance developing IEPs, S.M.A.R.T. goals, and planning your updating schedule to ensure your IEP is a meaningful tool? Ask us... we can help.

Principle Six: Opening Doors

Principle six, "opening doors," speaks to the heart of organizations executing HVRP: organizations doing employment services should do whatever possible to remove barriers to employment. This principle demands that programs help open access to employment opportunities for those who are most in need and who have the most significant barriers.

You know that your program already works to fulfill this principle. You help veterans access their benefits so they have supplemental income. You help participants connect to the housing opportunities that meet their needs. You make referrals to treatment and support groups, and help set up medical appointments to support health and sobriety. You connect to legal services, child care, and counseling. You provide or refer to basic life skills training for money management and nutrition. None of these activities directly relate to a specific job, yet you do them anyway, recognizing the importance of removing barriers to employment for individual veterans. In so many little ways that never show up on your formal reports, you slowly relieve the weight of these barriers from the shoulders of the veterans who walk through your door.

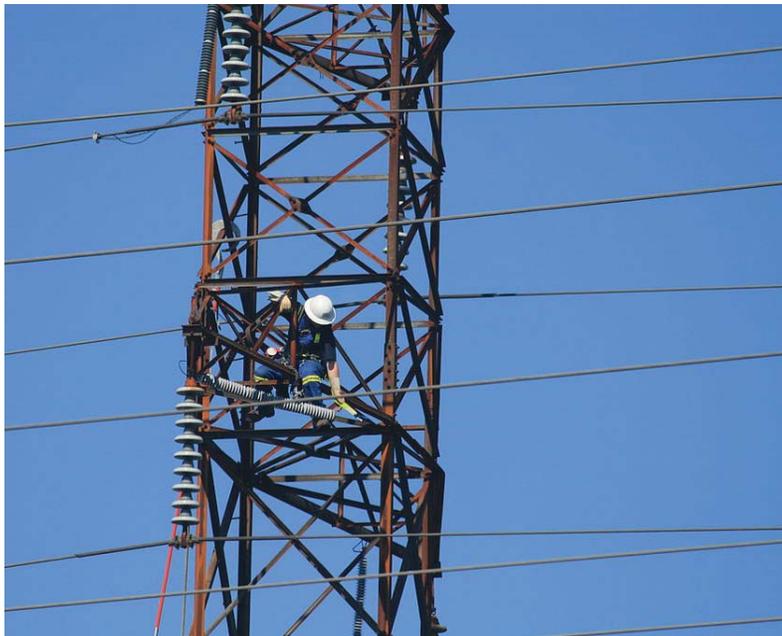


Implementing this principle involves chipping away barriers for the veteran, but it also involves acting as an advocate within your community to remove the blockades that separate homeless persons from competitive em-

ployment opportunities. Moving forward, you can use JAN accommodation resources to serve as an advocate in the workplace for veterans with disabilities. Online training on IPS Supported Employment, offered by NCHV in partnership with the Dartmouth Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center, equips case managers and job developers with extra tools to support employment retention for individuals with co-occurring disabilities. Connect to your state vocational rehabilitation services to support assistive technology and training costs. When working with employers, know the facts supported by research: veterans in your program will make strong, loyal employees with the right supports in place. Review the TA Center research briefs on the NCHV website for the research to support your outreach.

Principle Seven: Regional Partnerships

The final principle of job-driven training asks providers to coordinate major players in local and regional employment services. The list of partners is long, including: Workforce Investment Boards and the American Job Centers they oversee, higher education institutions, labor organizations, philanthropic organizations, state and local human service agencies, vocational rehabilitation agencies, Medicaid agencies, centers for independent living, supported employment providers, community- and faith-based organizations, and other nonprofit organizations.



Your HVRP may already be involved in a coordinated regional effort to connect major employment partners, but in many communities, this coordinated body does not yet exist.

There are other initiatives moving within local communities, and you can be the voice of employment services within these regional efforts to end veteran homelessness.

Are you already a part of your Continuum of Care (CoC)? Your CoC is required to serve veterans who are not eligible for VHA healthcare services. Find out how they are doing this, and make sure employment is at the table. Your CoC likely has a veterans sub-committee, or an employment sub-committee. Find out and be there.

If your community is part of the 25 Cities Initiative, you should be at the table there too. Make sure you and your AJC are part of these meetings and planning efforts. Learn more about Zero: 2016, another major initiative aimed at ending veteran homelessness in more communities across the country. Did your community apply, and if they did, what is their plan? Find out and be a part of it.

Is your Mayor signed onto the Mayor's Initiative, and would he or she be willing to take the lead in coordinating these partners to support veteran employment? Make the case that stable income, including both competitive employment and benefits, is the key to housing stability for veterans who are homeless or at high risk of homelessness. This can be the Mayor's opportunity to have a profound impact on the push to end veteran homelessness.

Having trouble connecting to these efforts? Call us... we can help.

Next Steps

The principles outlined here are more than requirements; they are guideposts or lighthouses for where your program can go. Take the big objectives of job-driven training and see what they mean for your organization. How important are these objectives: connecting the long-term unemployed to competitive jobs; serving those most in need of an advocate; fostering self-confidence and community connection through the power of employment. If you applied for HVRP funds, you likely have these core principles as foundations for the work you already do.

We suggest reading through these seven principles and making lists of what you currently do and what you think you can do, based on the suggestions we provided and others you develop internally and through conversations with your TA partners and other grantees. Turn these lists into actionable next steps with timelines. Make sure steps are assigned to the individuals in your organization who are best able to execute those steps. Write out how you do and will document completion and outcomes of these steps. Use the resources below to guide your plan.

Your TA partners are here to work through this process with you. Connect to us early and we can work with you one on one to develop this action plan.



Additional Resources

Ready to Work Fact Sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/07/22/fact-sheet-ready-work-glance-job-driven-training-and-american-opportunit>)

Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/skills_report.pdf)

Job-Driven Training Memo (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/30/presidential-memorandum-job-driven-training-workers>)

American Job Center (<http://jobcenter.usa.gov/>)

Mayor's Initiative (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/veteran_information/mayors_challenge/)

MyNextMove (<http://www.mynextmove.org/>)

O*NET (<http://www.onetonline.org/>)

O*NET Interest Profiler (<http://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>)

Contact the NCHV TA Center at 202-546-1969 or hvrp@nchv.org

Hiring Our Heroes (<http://www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes>)