

What is the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment initiative?

Since 1995, the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) have been involved in a joint initiative to improve the way vocational rehabilitative services are provided to disabled veterans (Chapter 31 participants). A memorandum of understanding between the agencies contains a key provision that:

"Personnel in their respective agencies, as well as those employed with their federally funded agencies and programs, are expected to work together to maximize the services they provide on behalf of disabled veterans and their dependents. Their ultimate goal is successful job placement and adjustment to employment for disabled veterans without duplication, fragmentation, or delay in the services provided."

Through this joint initiative, DOL/VETS and VA/VR&E have focused on improved cooperation, coordination, and measurable interaction between the agencies on behalf of disabled veterans enrolled in the VR&E program.



How does the initiative work?

Relevant federal, state, and local staff maintain a team approach to job development and placement for participants in the vocational rehabilitation program. VR&E refers disabled veterans who have completed a program of training to VETS Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, who help them enter employment consistent with the training they received by VR&E.

Participants register with the Public Labor Exchange (PLE), and are enrolled in the local employment services case management system for job search activities. Although VR&E staff retain primary case management responsibilities, they rely on DVOP staff to report on the participant's progress.

What are the operating principles of the joint initiative?

- **Case Management.** An effective case management system focuses the delivery of services on an individual and his/her goal of achieving suitable employment and successful rehabilitation. VR&E implements case management procedures in order to focus on the unique needs of the individual participant and establish one plan of action (the Individualized Employment Assistance Plan). Generally, the designated case manager is a Vocational Rehabilitation



Specialist (VRS) or the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC). DVOP staff contribute labor market information and job development assistance to the plan.

- **Referral.** A team approach capitalizes on the strengths of the partner agencies and fosters the ideals of a seamless service delivery system to improve customer service. A smooth participant transition from training to job search activities relies on partnerships between VR&E and DVOP staff.
- **Reporting.** Accurate data collection and timely reporting is essential to documenting interagency efforts and subsequent outcomes.
- **Oversight/Monitoring.** A proactive oversight and monitoring effort ensures the identification and elimination of problems resulting in a more effective service delivery system for disabled veterans.
- **Accountability.** Accountability for the successful rehabilitation for participants is the responsibility for all individuals involved in the interagency effort.



Results of the Joint Initiative

Cooperation between DOL and the VA has improved steadily through joint training initiatives, information exchanges, routine and open lines of communication, problem solving, and aggressive oversight.

Outcomes indicate that the number of disabled veterans finding suitable employment through the combined effort increased consistently since 1995. Improvements in services to disabled veterans relies heavily on routine cooperation among the front line staff of VR&E, State Employment Security Agencies (SESA), and other federal and local agencies.

For More Information

For more information regarding VR&E and VETS' other programs and services, visit our website at: www.dol.gov/vets

Veterans' Employment and Training Service

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The mission of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is to provide veterans and transitioning service members with the resources and services to succeed in the 21st century workforce by maximizing their employment opportunities, protecting their employment rights, and by meeting labor-market demands with qualified veterans.

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