



*A literature review on this topic revealed the following practices to be evidence based and effective. The intention of this review is to substantiate best practices in HVRPs with research findings in the professional workforce development literature, such as they exist and are relevant to the HVRP population. Where research is limited or not directly about veterans or homeless populations, inferences were made to inform HVRP practices.*



## WHAT WORKS?

Research at  
Your Fingertips

## PARTNERING WITH EMPLOYERS FOR JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING: THE EVIDENCE

Efforts to help individuals with barriers to work succeed in competitive employment increasingly focus on strategies that include collaborating with employers, creating training to fill in-demand jobs, and providing necessary services and supports. Research indicates that individuals served by these efforts are finding good paying jobs with benefits in high-demand industries. The programs that use job-driven approaches are creating strong partnerships among business, labor, education, and training services. Recent research results follow.

**Job development works.** Job development has been defined as “direct or indirect contact with potential employers or networking with individuals or organizations that [have] job information” (Leff et al., 2005). One study found that recipients of job development were almost five times as likely to obtain competitive employment (jobs in mainstream settings that pay prevailing wages) as individuals who did not receive job development. Individuals with no prior work experience had virtually no chance of acquiring a competitive job without job development.

**Professional certifications lead to increased income.** In 2012, individuals with professional certifications or licenses earned more than those without these credentials at each level of education below a bachelor’s degree. Credentials related to technology, state licensure, and in-demand occupations are associated with especially positive outcomes (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

**Registered Apprentices find jobs at higher wages.** Participants in Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs receive wages from employers while gaining industry-specific technical instruction that leads to a nationally recognized certification. Studies show that 87 percent of apprentices are employed after completing their programs, and the average starting wage for apprenticeship graduates is over \$50,000 (The White House, 2014). Reed et al. (2012) found that RA participants earned an average of \$5,839 more than similar nonparticipants in the

*Suggested Citation:*

National Veterans Technical Assistance Center. (2016). Best practices #1: Partnering with employers for job-driven training: The evidence. From *What Works? Research at Your Fingertips* Best Practices series. Retrieved from <http://www.nvtac.org/best-practices/>.

ninth year following program enrollment. Over a career, the estimated earnings of RA participants are an average of \$98,718 more than similar nonparticipants.

**Job-driven training is built on making smart choices.** Results of a randomized controlled trial found that individual training account customers who received structured guidance about in-demand jobs and training were more likely to be employed in the occupation for which they were trained and to earn more than individuals who chose training and careers on their own (Perez-Johnson, Moore, & Santillano, 2011). An evaluation of assistance provided to unemployment insurance recipients in Nevada found that those who

received labor market information, re-employment planning, and job search skills training had reduced periods of unemployment, faster re-employment, and increased earnings compared to a control group that received no special services (Michaelides, Poe-Yamagata, Benus, & Tirumalasetti, 2012).

**Sector-focused training prepares jobseekers for in-demand jobs.** Sector-focused employment strategies help connect low-skilled workers and those with barriers to employment to job opportunities by addressing unmet needs of local employers and by improving participants' skills to succeed in these in-demand jobs. Results of several initiatives follow.

The Aspen Institute's Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project (SEDLP). This multisite evaluation investigated the key characteristics of six well-known sectoral employment training programs. Findings at the end of 24 months revealed the following (Blair, 2002):

- Ninety-five percent of SEDLP participants held jobs during the year, and 84 percent were employed at the time of their follow-up interviews (compared to an employment rate of 28 percent at program enrollment).
- Two years after training, SEDLP participants had increased their annual earnings by an average of \$13,679, and average annual earnings for employed respondents were \$19,344.
- Seventy-seven percent of jobs held 2 years after training provided access to health insurance, 74 percent provided paid vacation, and 63 percent provided paid sick leave. Sixty-eight percent of jobs provided access to a retirement or pension plan.
- 82 percent of respondents reported that they thought their career prospects were better because of their participation in industry-targeted training.

In addition, in the first year following training, 27 percent of the SEDLP participants moved above the poverty line on the basis of earned income alone (Rademacher, 2001). Investigators believe this highlights the need to hold a long-term view of workforce development that seeks "not to place individuals in the *first* jobs available, but to train them for the *best* jobs available [emphasis original] (Blair, 2002).

**Public/Private Ventures' Sectoral Employment Initiative.** Nine organizations participated in this project to determine whether low-income participants in sectoral programs experienced positive changes. Findings from this non-experimental study revealed that participants in sectoral training programs increased their wages and earnings, accessed higher-quality jobs, and had decreases in poverty, from 64 percent to 35 percent (Roder, Clymer, & Wyckoff, 2008). Eighty-three percent of participants agreed that the training prepared them well for work in the targeted sector, and 78 percent said the program had improved their chances of getting a good job.

**Public/Private Ventures' Sectoral Employment Impact Study.** In 2003, based on these positive findings, Public/Private Ventures launched the Sectoral Employment Impact Study (SEIS), a random assignment evaluation of sector-focused programs. At the end of the 24-month study period, participants in sector-focused training earned 18 percent—about \$4,500—more than individuals in the control group. Study participants were significantly more likely to work and to work consistently, in jobs with higher wages that offered benefits. (Maguire, Freely, Clymer, Conway, & Schwartz, 2010).

**Job training is necessary but not sufficient.** Some job seekers also need services and support. Many of the most promising programs that serve disadvantaged jobseekers feature a mix of employment services, job training, and supportive services. Studies show that a range of services and supports, including childcare and transportation, are needed to enable disadvantaged individuals to participate in job training and employment (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach to supported employment is an evidence-based intervention that helps individuals with barriers to work find, get, and keep competitive employment. It blends a focus on supportive services with job development. About two-thirds of individuals who receive IPS services succeed in competitive employment. Typically, they work 20 hours or more per week and sustain employment for years (Bond & Drake, 2012). IPS produces better employment outcomes regardless of participants' demographic, clinical, and employment characteristics (Campbell, Bond, & Drake, 2011).

Moreover, a recent study found that the beneficial impact of supported employment on work at 2 years was sustained over the 5-year follow-up period (Hoffmann, Jäckel, Glauser, Mueser, & Kupper, 2014). Participants in supported employment were more likely to obtain competitive work than those in traditional

vocational rehabilitation (65 percent compared with 33 percent). They worked more hours and weeks, earned more wages, and had longer job tenures.

IPS helps Veterans, as well. A study of unemployed Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder who were randomly assigned to either IPS or to a Veterans Health Administration vocational rehabilitation program (VRP) revealed that IPS participants were 2.7 times more likely than those assigned to VRP to gain competitive employment (Davis et al., 2012). IPS participants worked substantially more weeks and earned higher 12-month income.

Another study examined a low-intensity approach for implementing IPS at nine Department of Veterans Affairs programs that serve Veterans who experience homelessness. Investigators found that IPS was associated with improved employment outcomes and more rapid housing placement (Rosenheck & Mares, 2007). The mean number of employment days per month over the 2-year follow-up period was 15 percent higher for Veterans who received IPS.

## REFERENCES

- Blair, A. J. (2002). *Measuring up and weighing in: Industry-based workforce development training results in strong employment outcomes*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute.
- Bond, G. R., & Drake, R. E. (2012). Making the case for IPS supported employment. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 39(6). DOI 10.1007/s10488-012-0444-6
- Campbell, K., Bond, G. R., & Drake, R. E. (2011). Who benefits from supported employment: A meta-analytic study. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 37(2), 370–380.
- Davis, L. L., Leon, A. C., Toscano, R., Drebing, C., E., Ward, L. C., Parker, P. E., Drake, R. E. (2012). A randomized controlled trial of supported employment among Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Psychiatric Services*, 63(5), 464–470.

**REFERENCES** *continued*

- Hoffmann, H., Jäckel, D., Glauser, S., Mueser, K. T., & Kupper, Z. (2014). Long-term effectiveness of supported employment: 5-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 171(11), 1183–1190 . DOI: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2014.13070857
- Leff, H. S., Cook, J. A., Gold, P. B., Toprac, M., Blyler, C., Goldberg, R. W.,...Raab, B. (2005). Effects of job development and job support on competitive employment of persons with severe mental illness. *Psychiatric Services*, 56(10), 1237–1244.
- Maguire, S., Freely, J., Clymer, C., Conway, M., & Schwartz, D. (2010). *Tuning in to local labor markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- Michaelides, M., Poe-Yamagata, E., Benus, J., & Tirumalasetti, D. (2012). *Impact of the Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) Initiative in Nevada*. Columbia, MD: Impac International.
- Perez-Johnson, I., Moore, Q., & Santillano, R. (2011). *Improving the effectiveness of Individual Training Accounts: Long-term findings from an experimental evaluation of three service delivery models*. Oakland, CA: Mathematica Policy Research.
- Rademacher, I. S. (2001). *Measure for measure: Assessing traditional and sectoral strategies for workforce development*. SEDLP Policy Project Series Report No. 2. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute.
- Reed, D., Liu, A. Y-H., Kleinman, R., Mastri, A., Reed, D., Sattar, S., & Ziegler, J. (2012). *An effectiveness assessment and cost-benefit analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 states*. Oakland, CA: Mathematica Policy Research.
- Roder, A., Clymer, C., & Wyckoff, L. (2008). *Targeting industries, training workers and improving opportunities: The final report from the Sectoral Employment Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- Rosenheck, R., & Mares, A. S. (2007). Implementation of supported employment for homeless Veterans with psychiatric or addiction disorders: Two-year outcomes. *Psychiatric Services*, 58, 325–333.
- The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (2014, April 16). *American job training investments: Skills and jobs to build a stronger middle class*. Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/16/fact-sheet-american-job-training-investments-skills-and-jobs-build-stron>
- U.S. Department of Labor. (2014). *What works in job training: A synthesis of the evidence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



**National Veterans Technical Assistance Center**

View more NVTAC success stories at [NVTAC.org](http://NVTAC.org)