

Keeping Up the Good Work

An E-Learning Course for Veterans Enrolled in HVRPs

Introduction

The hard work is not over. Once you have accepted a job, your real work begins. It wasn't easy getting the job. Now, you need to figure out how to stay in the job. Doing the work is only part of it. There are other things that will also influence your success. Many of us want to hold on to a job, whether that is because we like what we do, we need the money to pay bills, or we want to stay occupied and feel productive—or all of these things. *Keeping up the Good Work* is a course to help you consider and plan for all the things that might challenge you at work. You can take the course online using an internet-connected computer.

It was developed by the National Veterans Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC) as a tool for Veterans enrolled in the U.S. Department of Labor funded Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs (HVRP). It was field tested with Veterans sitting in front of computers, using headsets, who independently took the course at their own pace. A staff member was available to answer questions.

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If you have questions about the course or job retention, you can ask your HVRP Employment Specialist. If more information is needed you can contact the NVTAC Regional Liaison listed for your Region at <http://www.nvtac.org/about/contact.htm>.

Why job retention

We think this job retention course can help both Veterans and employers. From the employers' point of view, employee turnover is a normal part of the business cycle. Although employers know that from time to time employees will leave, be it to retire, because of performance problems, or just in response to changing circumstances in their lives, high turnover is to be avoided. The reason most employers are eager to hold onto their workers is that losing a

worker costs money. Whenever a worker leaves, the employer must hire and train a replacement. The costs associated with these required steps in acquiring a new employee can be substantial.

From the Veteran's point of view, holding on to work is also desirable. Once we have a job, we want to keep it and hopefully get a better job. We put in a lot of effort to get the job and enjoy the earnings we receive. Working also gives us more than money. It binds us to our community, and gives us a sense of purpose as well as a place to go every day. Research says that working makes us feel better about ourselves, and it's more than a paycheck—although moving successfully from one job to another is often associated with increased income.

What the course is about

The purpose of the online course *Keeping Up The Good Work* is to help Veterans enrolled in HVRPs not only to focus on what it takes to keep a job, but to learn how to *plan* for staying employed. This course is meant to serve as a support to *you* while enrolled in your HVRP program, and as a supplement to the work of HVRP employment specialists all over the country.

Keeping Up the Good Work is a course about job retention – that is, keeping a current job and transitioning, or moving to a new job when necessary. Job transitions are common in every working life, whether you are in the food service industry, construction, or a computer technology field. People get hired, fired, and leave jobs every day. Job retention is not only about holding on to the job you have, but also getting promoted or moving on to another job when one ends. The better prepared you are for job transitions, the longer you will stay employed, and the more successful you will be.

There are six modules in the course:

- Module 1: An Introduction to the Course
- Module 2: How People Keep Their Jobs
- Module 3: Why People Lose Their Jobs
- Module 4: Managing Stress on the Job
- Module 5: Using Supports for Long-Term Success and Stability
- Module 6: Summary and Conclusion

Each module is narrated, providing the learner with information as well as useful directions.

How to access the course

Simply go to the website www.nvtac.org/keepingupthegoodwork and take the course. It is free and there is no identification, log-in, or password required. You can take the course whenever you like and as many times as you like. Please note: You will not be able to save your coursework

on this website, so keep track of where you left off so you can return to that place if completing the course in multiple sittings.

What is needed to complete the course

If your computer is connected to the internet wirelessly, it should have a high-speed wireless internet connection in order to stream a file with video and audio together. A wired connection to the internet will work best. The screen display should be set at 1280x1024. If you are uncertain about the connection or the display setting, check with a staff member at your location.

It will help if your computer is connected to a printer. In some modules, you will have the opportunity to print a document or be directed to another website. The course also contains a number of handouts for your reference. You may want to print information that you find useful or want to refer to in the future.

It is a good idea for you to have a notebook for your personal use when you take this course. We think you will find some of the course noteworthy and you will want to write down some of the course information that you will hear or read. You may also want to write down some of your reactions or thoughts to the course material as you make your way through the modules. Also, there are a number of exercises that will use your notebook even if you do not take personal notes along the way. In general, we recommend that Veterans keep a journal or notebook about their work experiences that can include information about job searching as well as job keeping.

How can the course be used

There are at least two ways this course can be used. First, it was intended as an independent tool for Veterans. It is self-directed, meaning that the audio track in the course is essentially the instructor providing directions as well as information. It is also self-paced, meaning that a Veteran can proceed in the course as quickly or as slowly as they choose. A Veteran can also choose which module(s) they wish to take.

Second, some HVRP staff inquired as to whether or not the course could be used in a class or group led by staff in the program. We do not see any barrier to do this. However, we suggest that staff consider facilitating a discussion group on retention for Veterans who independently complete all six modules of the course.

Certificate of Completion

When a Veteran has completed the course, we suggest that he or she print the certificate of completion included in Module 6 and bring the certificate to a staff member for verification and signature.