



## Job-Driven Training Principle One: Engaging with Employers

### *HVRP Grantee Spotlight on Service Case Study*

In 2014, the Federal government held a review of federal training programs in order to identify and implement steps to make these programs more “job-driven.” Job-driven training, 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,” includes seven core principles.

#### **Seven Core Principles of Job-Driven Training**

- **Principle One: Engage with Employers**
- Principle Two: Earn and Learn
- Principle Three: Use the Data
- Principle Four: Measure Results
- Principle Five: Stepping Stones
- Principle Six: Opening Doors
- Principle Seven: Regional Partnerships

Principle One, Engage with Employers, means programs should engage employers from the beginning to better understand the local or regional hiring needs. By understanding these needs, community agencies can develop and implement training and certification programs that meet those needs and are therefore directly tied to in-demand jobs.

Several successful HVRP grantees have longstanding relationships with employers, leading to direct requests from employers for specific skill sets from potential employees. These relationships can take on unique forms, depending on the agency and the community. The following relationship models employed by HVRP grantees provide a solid foundation of job-driven employment placement:

#### **Looking to National Employers to Set Hiring Trends**

Traditionally, many HVRP grantees have looked to their local employers in their labor market to identify specific opportunities that are currently available, and this strategy is effective for one-by-one hiring. However, over time other grantees have seen the value in expanding their view of employment placement to include national trends in veteran hiring and employment. By taking a bigger-picture view of employer markets, these grantees are better prepared for shifts within the labor market that can impact their programs and the veterans they serve.

By looking to the missions of national employers with veteran hiring initiatives, HVRP grantees can drive their advocacy with local branches or stores. Although many national companies have veteran hiring initiatives, some grantees have encountered hurdles locally when making the case to hire homeless or formerly homeless veterans enrolled in HVRP. By engaging early and using the national company’s commitment as a driving force in local conversations, HVRP grantees can work with local employers to implement veteran hiring initiatives aimed at building skill sets for homeless veterans. For example, veteran hiring initiatives with Lowe’s and Home Depot have motivated many HVRP grantees to engage directly with store leadership on behalf of potential veteran employees.

Other national employers, especially those with large Federal contracts, embrace diversity in hiring by pursuing the hiring of candidates with disabilities. These employers include many large hotel chains, like JW Marriott. With HVRP intervention with hiring managers at local branches of national employers, veteran participants in HVRP are more successful in obtaining employment.

### **Local Service Agencies as Hiring Partners**

Successful engagement with local employers requires understanding both their eligibility and training requirements and their company culture. Several HVRP grantees have tapped into a source of local employment with a familiar structure and culture to their own: their local service partners. Local government agencies and other Federal and state grantees are useful partners in the effort to end veteran homelessness and strong local employers.

Some HVRP grantees turn to local government agencies as potential employers. One major employment partner is the city or county transportation agency. In addition to providing services to veterans enrolled in HVRP, these transportation agencies can be successful employers of veterans seeking employment. Often, these transportation agencies provide comprehensive training and certification programs for drivers and other transportation personnel.

Building off of the VA Secretary's efforts to ramp up hiring at local VA Medical Centers, some HVRP grantees have capitalized on openings for peer specialists and case managers to get veterans in HVRP good jobs with the VA. Separate from VA opportunities through Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E), these VA positions are full-time, permanent, competitive wage jobs with opportunities for growth. The direct connection between VAMCs and HVRP grantees for services allows veterans in HVRP to bypass lengthy Federal application processes that can stymie employment for the veteran and the employer.

Other HVRP grantees reach out to their local community agency partners as potential employers. Goodwill Industries, Volunteers of America, and Easter Seals locations across the country provide a full spectrum of services: some employ veterans from HVRP, others implement HVRP grants in their agency, and others provide some level of training and supportive services for veterans enrolled in local HVRP programs.