

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT FIELD INSTRUCTION (WIFI) No. 09-12

DATE: February 25, 2013

TO: Maryland Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Grant Recipients

SUBJECT: Roles and Responsibilities of Veterans Representatives in Tracking, Offering Employment Services, and Reporting Outcomes of Veterans Training Assistance Program (VRAP) Participants

REFERENCES: VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 ("VOW Act," Title II of Pub. L. 112-56); TEGL37-11, Notification of Available funds to implement Veterans-Related Reporting Requirements in the Labor Exchange Reporting System (LERS); Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 43-11 and Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 07-12, Overview of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), section 211 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011; and TEGL 7-12, Implementing the Veterans-Related and Other Reporting Change Requirements in the Labor Exchange Reporting System (LERS).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On November 21, 2011, President Obama signed the VOW Act (Title II of Pub. L. 112-56) into law, which established VRAP. Under the VRAP, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in cooperation with DOL, pays up to 12 months of retraining assistance to unemployed, eligible veterans aged 35 to 60 who participate in training programs for "high demand" occupations. Eligibility is jointly determined by DOL and VA. The "high demand" occupations list is a national list, as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and ETA. VRAP may accept applications to enroll up to 45,000 veterans in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, from July 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, and up to 54,000 veterans from October 1, 2012 through October 1, 2013, with training concluding by March 31, 2014.

In order to qualify for retraining assistance, a veteran must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- Be at least 35 but not more than 60 years old, at the time of application;
- Be unemployed on the date of application;
- Not enrolled in any Federal or state job training program at any time during the previous 180-day period as of the application date;
- In receipt of an other than dishonorable discharge from the last period of active duty service in the armed forces;
- Not eligible for any other VA educational assistance;
- Not in receipt of VA compensation for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling by reason of unemployability; and
- Submit an application no later than October 1, 2013.

PURPOSE:

To inform the public workforce system about the required process for outreaching to and tracking outcomes of VRAP participants. This includes how the Department of Labor (DOL) will make available VRAP participant information to the public workforce system and procedures for American Job Center (formerly One-Stop Career Center) staff to offer VRAP participants employment assistance upon program completion or termination as required by the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. This guidance also provides reporting specifications for reporting public workforce system outreach activities and the employment outcomes of VRAP participants.

REPORTING:

VRAP participants will attend a training program leading to an AA degree or a certificate (or other evidence of completion of the program) leading to a high demand occupation. American Job Center staff is responsible for providing outreach to offer employment services to VRAP participants within 30 days of participant completing or terminating training.

DOL will send a file to each State on a weekly basis, MD will then, once file is received, distribute securely among American Job Centers where appropriate. DOL will work with VA to compile and disseminate to states a participant file on a weekly basis of those completing or terminating training. The data file will include the following data elements: Name, DOB, Email, Phone Number, High Demand Occupation Selected, Address, State, Zip Code, Name of facility, Course Name, Objective Name, DOL Assigned ID, Employment Assistance.

Once an American Job Center receives a VRAP file, the Center manager should assign participants to staff as appropriate per roles and responsibilities. Assigned staff should attempt to provide outreach to each participant assigned. An outreach attempt is any of the following: physical letter sent to participant, phone call to participant or email to participant. If contact is made, staff should encourage the applicant to visit the One Stop so staff can provide employment services to the veteran and register him or her into the state's reporting system (Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE)). In instances where the initial outreach attempt is not successful a minimum of 2 additional attempts should be made within the 30 days period after the VRAP participant completed or terminated training. After the 3rd failed attempt, no further outreach is required.

Outreach will result in one of the following scenarios:

1. Contact made, participant looking for a job/requests further assistance: all attempts should be made to persuade the veteran to come into the One Stop center or to sign up for WP services virtually. This will not only allow for staff to serve and track the participant, but it will greatly aid in tracking performance outcomes.
2. Contact made, participant already found employment: in this scenario, the participant may not want/need additional services as he or she has already found employment. However, since this individual will not be a new registrant in the WP program this outcome will not be counted for workforce system performance purposes, but it will need to be tracked for documenting outreach and reporting for VRAP.

3. Contact made, participant is not seeking further assistance: if a participant is not willing to participate in additional follow-up services or refuses to register for WP services over the phone, then this outcome will not count for performance purposes but will need to be tracked for documenting outreach and reporting for VRAP.
4. Contact cannot be made: After 3 unsuccessful attempts to contact veteran within the specified 30 days' timeframe, the veteran will be deemed: "non-responsive". The individual will be excluded for performance purposes but documentation of outreach to the veteran will need to be tracked.

REPORTING VRAP OUTCOMES:

DOL and VA are required to report no later than July 1, 2014 on the performance of VRAP. Report must include: total VRAP participants, number who earned credential (AA degree, certificate, and other credential) and data related to employment status. DOL will use the current employment measures of Entered Employment Rate (EER), Employment Retention Rate (ERR), and Median Earnings to satisfy the reporting requirement for employment status.

In order to register as many VRAP participants into the LERS reporting system as possible, DOL is recommending case managers take the following steps for reporting:

Once a case manager is assigned by a center manager, the case manager will receive his or her file on VRAP participants and should first query the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) to see if participant has already been registered in Wagner Peyser (WP) or Workforce Investment Act (WIA). If the case manager can find the participant and reasonably conclude the person is the same as the one registered (there will be no SSNs on VRAP file), then the case manager should assign service 191-Attended, Completed or Terminated Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). The case manager should then provide outreach and employment assistance.

If the participant has not already been registered into WP or WIA then the case manager should provide the outreach and employment assistance and attempt to have them come to the one stop center and register for WP when they are provided employment services. If an individual comes to the Center for services, the case manager should supply Service Code 191-Attended, Completed or Terminated Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP).

If the participant is contacted and does not come in to register for WP or WIA, then the case manager will use the Employment Assistance column on the spreadsheet they receive from the DOL and MD to track what the outcome of the contact was.

- Record 1 if the individual was contacted and did not need employment assistance because they already had a job
- Record 2 if individual was contacted and does not come in to receive employment assistance for any reason

- Record 3 if individual was non-responsive to the offering of employment assistance
- Record 4 if the individual was either already registered in the WP program, or case manager was able to register the individual after VRAP training completed

This information from the Centers will be collected on a quarterly basis so the state can share the file documenting outreach efforts with DOL.

**CONTACT
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EFFECTIVE: February 18, 2013



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