

# Executive Summary Report



## U.S. Department of Labor Office of Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)

### 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference

#### INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the meeting logistics for the 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference held on August 6-9, 2007 in Denver, Colorado. This summary will provide information regarding the successes and challenges of the meeting, a synopsis of the Conference, descriptions of the host facility, plenary, breakout sessions, registration and evaluation analysis.

The contracting team for this conference consisted of Premier Consultants International, Inc. (prime) and the National Learning Center (NLC), University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado (sub-contractor).

#### SUCSESSES

- The contractor successfully secured meeting space at a renowned facility within U.S. Government guidelines.
- The contractor successfully secured sleeping accommodations at the host facility at the U.S. Government lodging rate inclusive of meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner each day. And, secured sleeping accommodations at the host facility sister property for overflow. There were three participants who stayed at the Red Lion Inn (sister property).
- The number of registered participants was 347, which met the client's estimated number of attendees.
- The client, participants and the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Charles Ciccolella were pleased with the overall conference.
- The pre-conference meeting included hotel officials from each department, our client, Ms. Kristine McLaughlin and staff. This was a forum to meet and identify key personnel on both sides. The hotel sales manager provided key staff with gold gavels, so that hotel personnel could respond accordingly. Also, this was an opportunity to address questions, concerns and review the banquet and event orders. The meeting was informative and beneficial to all parties.
- The contractor provided customer satisfaction by adhering to the request of participants to begin pre-registration two and half hours earlier than scheduled on the agenda.

- The contractor addressed and resolved with positive results hotel reservations/issues for speakers and participants.
- The contractor opted to provide a formal setting regarding signage, display of materials and sign-in sheets for breakout sessions.
- The contractor provided their audio visual technician in addition to Presentation Services Audio Visual (PSAV) on-site company at the hotel to assist speakers and resolve technical problems, in most instances before PSAV staff. This was also cost effective because an additional on-site audio visual technician was needed.
- The contractor secured a service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB), Million Dollar Promotions for the giveaways.

## **CHALLENGES**

- The participants were provided clear and precise instructions for on-line registration information to register and reserve their sleeping accommodations by July 20, 2007. However, several participants did not adhere to the registration and hotel cut-off date.
- The participants received notification of specified timelines for submission of power point presentations to be printed and assembled in the manuals. There were several presentations received after the deadline and were not assembled in the manuals, but were distributed as handouts. It was a challenge to respond and provide large volumes of copies for last minute handouts. The contractor address this critical issue operating two copiers, one on-site and the other at the National Learning Center's offices within walking distance. Additionally, both copiers broke and the contractor requested printing services from the hotel sales manager which was costly. The overall cost for last minute printing services was approximately \$7,988.90.
- The contractor asked government officials about speakers' travel. Funding was not allocated in the contract award for speakers' travel. Therefore, providing travel for speakers within government regulations and a tight deadline was challenging.
- The contractor requested the hotel officials to adjust the temperature regarding the excessive heat during pre-registration in the lobby area in response to participants concerns. The hotel officials provided a fan because the air condition system was broke. The intensive heat in the registration area created an uncomfortable environment that was difficult to conduct business.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The contractor recommends that the conference host city is rotated each year, beginning FY 2008. This allows the participants to travel to other regional offices, different venue and promotes the interest level for intensive training sessions. This recommendation is based on written and verbal requests received from participants. The conference has been hosted in Denver, CO for the last three years (FY 2005 – FY 2007).
- The contractor recommends a modification to contract for the 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference regarding allocation of funding for speaker travel. This will allow the contractor to work closely with the client (Ms. Kristine McLaughlin,

Grants Lead, VETS) to manage all aspects of travel for speakers within specified timelines.

- The contractor recommends that a high speed copier machine, computer and printer will be on-site in the staff office as standard procedure.
- The contractor recommends that the Patriotic Video is included on the agenda for future conferences. The video was well received by the participants.
- The contractor recommends approval of participation beginning with the initial conference call with the Competitive Grants Expert Clusters (CGECs) and client is essential in the planning of the conference.
- The contractor recommends a final check list meeting with the client and VETS officials to ensure that all parties are in agreement. And, that a pre-conference meeting is scheduled at the host facility as standard procedure.

## **OVERVIEW**

The 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference is held annually. The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) conducts one national technical assistance and training session for over 100 competitive grantees each year. All organizations receiving new or continued funding under the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) and/or Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program (IVTP) are required to attend the 2007 training session as indicated in their respective Solicitation for Grant Applications.

The pre-conference registration began at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, August 6, 2007 and adjourned at 6:30 p.m. Registration was scheduled 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 and staffed each day. The conference began on Tuesday, August 7, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day and concluded on Thursday, August 9, 2007.

The conference focused on the following areas: customized employment, overview of common measures, case management, indirect cost, post-award grant information and training on general and special grant provisions, reporting requirements, overview of Veterans Administration and programs for veterans.

### **Day 1**

The plenary session began at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 and was opened by Ms. Kristine McLaughlin, Grants Lead, Office of Veterans' and Employment Training Service (VETS). Ms. McLaughlin served as Moderator throughout the conference. Immediately following the opening was the Posting of the Colors, Mr. John Harold Buckley, American Legion Post 32, Longmont, CO. and the National Anthem, Ms. Cynthia Morrison, USDOL-VETS. The welcome address was conducted by Ms. Vaune Shelbourn, Director, National Veterans Training Institute and Assistant Secretary, Mr. Charles Ciccolella, USDOL, VETS. The speakers for the morning session were Mr. John Driscoll, Vice President, Operations and Programs National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV), Ms. Cynthia High, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans' Programs

and Mr. Pete Dougherty, Director of Homeless Programs, Department of Veterans Affairs. Following the presentations, there was a question and answer session.

There were five concurrent training breakout sessions scheduled 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. consisting of General and Special Grant Provisions Overview presented by USDOL VETS Competitive Grants Expert (CGEC) Members; Case Management Overview, presented by The National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), Customized Employment, presented by USDOL Office of Disability and Employment Policy; Indirect Costs: A General Overview, presented by USDOL Office of Cost Determinations and Common Measures Overview, presented by USDOL VETS CGEC Members. Plenary resumed at 4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. to wrap up, collection of evaluation forms, random drawing of prizes and closing remarks.

### Day 2

There were five concurrent training sessions beginning at 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 noon consisting of General & Special Grants Provisions – What's New, HHS/PMS Grantee Electronic Finance System, Customized Employment and VOPAR Reporting System and Goals Sheet Data Entry. The Indirect Costs: A General Overview session was scheduled at 9:00 a.m.; and the Allowable and Unallowable Costs session was scheduled at 10:45 a.m.

The plenary session began at 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. and the focus was on Grantee Best Practices in the following categories: Prima County – Networking, St. Patrick's Center – Financial Balancing, Ohio Valley Goodwill – HUD Grants and Continuum of Care (COC's) and Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA, Inc – Mr. Tadarryl Jones, Case Manager. The plenary session resumed at 3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. and the focus was on E-Grants Overview Training by USDOL – ETA. Wrap up began at 4:45 p.m. and collection of evaluation forms, random drawing for prizes and closing remarks.

### Day 3

The plenary session began at 9:00 a.m. with opening remarks by Ms. Kristine McLaughlin, Grants Lead, DOL VETS. Beginning at 9:15 a.m. there was a Stand Down Activities Overview by USDOL – VETS and the focus was on Grantee Best Practices in the following categories: Vietnam Veterans of San Diego and Operation Stand Down Nashville.

There were five training breakout sessions beginning at 10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. consisting of General & Special Grants Provisions – What's New, HHS/PMS Grantee Electronic Financial System, NCHV hosts Grantee Best Practices Discussions, Case management Overview (part 1 of 2) and VOPAR Reporting System and Goals Sheet Data entry.

The plenary session resumed at 2:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. and the focus was on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Partners in the following categories: Overview of VA Housing and Homeless Programs, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi

Freedom, A New Generation of Veterans, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI). Following each presentation there was a question and answer session. Wrap up began at 4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and collection of evaluation forms, random drawing for prizes and closing remarks.

## **LOGISTICS**

Meeting logistics were coordinated and implemented collaboratively by the National Learning Center (NLC), University of Colorado and Premier Consultants International, Inc. (PCI). The point of contacts was Ms. Amanda Andrews, Media Coordinator, NLC and Ms. Margaret Hill Watts, Director, Business Operations, PCI. The Team shared in responsibilities to provide support to the client, Ms. Kristine McLaughlin, Grants Lead, VETS. On-site support at the 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference was provided by a total of eleven (11) NLC/PCI staff members.

The 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference was held at the host facility, the Doubletree Hotel in Denver, Colorado. The facility was obtained to accommodate up to 450 people for the plenary session, five breakout rooms and four display tables. Sleeping accommodations were secured for the out-of-state conference participants at the U.S. Government Rate inclusive of three meals per day at the Doubletree Hotel. The Red Lion hotel was the overflow facility and the sister property of the Doubletree Hotel. Complimentary shuttle service was provided at both properties for arrival/departure at the airport.

It is estimated that 437 persons attended the 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference. There were 337 pre-registrations as of July 26, 2007. Registered participants were provided name badges and conference bags with materials. Participants were encouraged to view the resource tables and obtain copies of resource materials (see Attachment 2 for the resource materials). The participants' List was included in the manual (see Attachment 3 for Participants and Final Participants Lists).

The plenary session was set up in banquet (rounds) style by regions with a riser for the presenters and a head table for six. The set-up was adjusted according to the number of panelists throughout the plenary session. The breakout sessions were set in classroom, rounds and theater style seating. The participants were requested to sign the breakout session sign-in sheets (Attachment 4).

The participants were provided breakfast, lunch and dinner, morning and afternoon breaks each day. On Friday, August 10, 2007 (travel day for most participants and staff) breakfast was provided.

In general conversation, the participants and officials reported that they were pleased with the host facility, catering and overall logistics at the Doubletree Hotel. But, the participants expressed a desire to have the FY 2008 and future conferences held in a different city and state.

## **EVALUATIONS**

The client requested evaluation forms for each day to be included in the conference manuals. There were extra evaluation forms provided for participants who did not have one or receive one previously. At the conclusion of the plenary each day, there was a drawing for prizes as an incentive for completion of evaluation forms. An evaluation analysis and summary report was prepared (See Attachment 5).

This was an outstanding method to keep participants engaged and greatly aided in the collection of evaluation forms. This practice should be continued for future conferences.

Attachment 1: Agenda: USDOL VETS 2007 Competitive Grantees Training  
Conference, August 6-9, 2007

Attachment 2: List of Resource Materials

Attachment 3: Participants List and Final Participants List

Attachment 4: Breakout Session Sign-In Sheets

Attachment 5: Evaluation Forms and Analysis

U.S. Department of Labor  
Veterans' Employment Training Service



## Summary Report

2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference  
August 6, 2007 through August 9, 2007

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### **Introduction**

The U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment Training Service (VETS) held their 2007 Competitive Grantees Training Conference in Denver, Colorado from August 6, 2007 through August 9, 2007. During this time, conference attendees had the opportunity to attend general conference sessions as well as separate breakout training sessions.

The titles of each session, as indicated on the conference agenda, were as follows:

- Opening Ceremonies and Welcomes
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Programs
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- General & Special Grant Provisions Overview
- Case Management Overview

- Customized Employment
- Indirect Costs: A General Overview
- Common Measures Overview
- Allowable and Unallowable Costs
- General & Special Grants Provisions – What’s New
- HHS/PMS Grantee Electronic Finance System
- Customized Employment
- Indirect Costs: A General Overview
- VOPAR Reporting System & Goals Sheet
- Pima County – Networking
- St. Patrick’s Center – Financial Balancing
- Ohio Valley Goodwill – HUD Grants & COC’s
- Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA, Inc
- E-Grants Overview Training by USDOL – ETA
- Stand Down Activities Overview by USDOL – VETS
- Vietnam Veterans of San Diego
- Operation Stand Down Nashville
- NCHV hosts Grantee Best Practices Discussions
- Overview of VA Housing and Homeless Programs
- Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom
- A New Generation of Veterans
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

The conference agenda is included with this report.

**Conference Participants**

Overall, 320 participants representing 44 states and the District of Columbia attended the conference. Included with this report is the Grantees Roster that contains the names, titles and contact information for conference attendees.

**Evaluation Data Summary**

At the end of each conference day, conference attendees were asked to complete a daily evaluation. Attendees were asked to rate each session using the following scale:

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

The evaluations also had space available for attendees to write comments regarding each sessions (included with this report are the completed hard-copy evaluations). Once the evaluations were completed, attendees returned the evaluations to the staff of the National Learning Center and the data was entered and summarized as shown below.

The following displays the number of evaluations received for each session (the “Count”) and the average rating score based on the above 4-point scale:

<b>Day 1 (August 7, 2007)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Average Score</b>
• Opening Ceremonies and Welcomes	205	3.73
• Department of Veterans Affairs	194	3.38

• National Coalition for Homeless Veterans	207	3.42
• Department of Housing and Urban Development	198	3.07
• Special Needs Assistance Program Specialists	137	3.33
• General & Special Grant Provisions	90	3.48
• Case Management Overview	77	3.64
• Customized Employment	60	3.39
• Indirect Costs: A General Overview	65	3.15
• Common Measures Overview	43	3.24

#### **Day 2 (August 8, 2007)**

• General & Special Grants Provisions	82	3.31
• HHS/PMS Grantee Electronic Finance System	30	3.00
• Customized Employment	62	3.76
• Indirect Costs: A General Overview	43	3.32
• VOPAR Reporting System	68	3.25
• Pima County – Networking	116	3.09
• St. Patrick’s Center – Financial Balancing	126	3.41
• Ohio Valley Goodwill – HUD Grants & COC’s	126	3.17
• Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA	129	3.15
• E-Grants Overview Training	112	2.71

#### **Day 3 (August 9, 2007)**

• Vietnam Veterans of San Diego	125	3.46
• Operation Stand Down Nashville	120	3.44
• General & Special Grants Provisions	37	3.57
• HHS/PMS Grantee Electronic Finance System	34	3.47
• NCHV hosts Grantee Best Practices	51	3.40
• Case Management Overview	41	3.63
• VOPAR Reporting System	51	3.48
• Overview of VA Housing and Homeless Programs	98	3.31
• Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom	107	3.27
• Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	108	3.37
• A New Generation of Veterans	105	3.41

Listed below are general conference coordination comments that were listed on the participant evaluations. The numbers in quotes next to the comment indicates the number of times the comment was listed.

All hard-copy evaluations, including the written comments, are included with this report.

#### **Comments Day 1 (August 7, 2007)**

- Need more silverware in the dining room
- Conference schedule is good (improvement)
- The interaction was great as well
- Please ask people before the conference to silence cell phones
- Need to keep coffee urns filled/Need water on tables
- Food is great.
- Print the participant list in a larger print, it was very hard to read
- We ran out of beverages at breakfast, there weren't enough place settings
- Have water on each table, during opening ceremonies “3”

Sit down lunch instead of buffet  
Individual organization names on name tags

### **Comments Day 2 (August 8, 2007)**

NVTI staff, they set up computer labs for those who want to learn  
Have the Double Tree re-start hourly runs to downtown Denver  
Make more time for networking  
It would really be great to have sessions for "New Provisions Grantee" and session geared toward previous experience  
Have conference outside of Denver  
Suggest a specific workshop for VWIP only  
Need to have separate training for VWIP and HVRP  
Separate the break out sessions for VWIP and HVRP  
Did I wander into a republican convention? I felt this conference was pro-war  
When anyone speaks, please use microphone  
Don't hide the flag  
Microphone for questions  
Coordination between CGEL, NVTI, and Premier consulting would help  
Include water and ice at each table  
Provide a Tex-Mex breakfast  
Great conference thus far  
The food is always cold  
Total waste of funds and my time  
Need bigger room for Common Measures "20"

### **Comments Day 3 (August 9, 2007)**

Well done, I learned and I met a lot of people Good job!  
Change location of conference  
This conference was better and well planned than last years  
This conference was very informative  
Discuss issues regarding grant activity  
Great conference "3"  
Excellent, very talented instructors and speakers  
Food is better this year  
More shuttles to downtown area  
Need to send conference offering to attendees prior to start  
No suggestions for improvement All sessions were very informative  
Separate VWIP and HVRP "2"  
Please do not repeat this agenda next year Use the feedback Too much repetition "2"  
Change time of dinner meal to immediately after end of day conference  
More grant training for grant tech areas  
Focus more on the DVOP/LVERS working at or wish grantees  
Consider different progressions for people who have been to the conference before and first timers  
Need more workshops