



Co-Enrollment of Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Participants in a Program at an American Job Center

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To make the most of resources of the public workforce system, veterans experiencing homelessness and participating in the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP)—a U.S. Department of Labor program providing employment services to homeless veterans—must enroll in one of three federally funded programs available at American Job Centers (AJCs) (U.S. Department of Labor 2016):¹

- Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA] Title I): provides individualized career and training services with priority to people with low incomes and who lack basic skills (Adult program) or to workers dislocated from their jobs (Dislocated Worker program).
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service (WIOA Title III): assists job seekers with their job searches, provides job referrals, and helps match seekers with jobs.
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG): allocates grants to states that funds three staff positions for veterans at AJCs: (1) *Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists* provide case management and other employment assistance to veterans with disabilities and other veterans facing barriers to employment; (2) *Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs)* conduct outreach to employers and work with DVOP specialists and other AJC staff to help veterans find employment; and (3) *Consolidated Position* staff fulfill both roles.

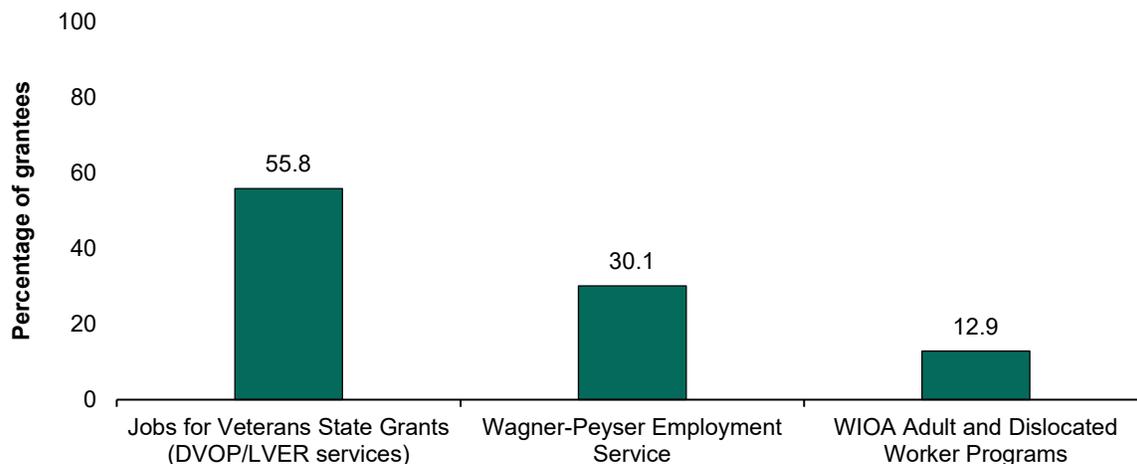
Using data from the grantee survey administered to grantees from program year 2020 and supplemented with interviews with staff from eight site visit grantees and their AJC partners, this document addresses three topics: (1) the AJC program in which a majority of HVRP participants were co-enrolled; (2) the percentage of participants receiving services at the AJC; and (3) the processes grantees used to co-enroll participants. More information about HVRP and the HVRP Evaluation is in Box 1.

1. In which AJC program were the majority of HVRP participants co-enrolled, as reported by grantees?

The survey results showed that, of the 147 grantees, approximately 56 percent responded that most of their HVRP participants were co-enrolled in JVSG (Figure 1). Fewer indicated that a majority of participants were enrolled in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service (30 percent) or WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs (13 percent). Grantee informants from the eight site visit communities described how the DVOP specialist at the AJC typically screened veterans for employment needs and service eligibility, referring the veteran to other programs at the AJC as appropriate.

¹ Additional information about Jobs for Veterans State Grants is available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs/grants/state/jvsg> and information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa>.

Figure 1. Percentage of grantees reporting a majority of HVRP participants co-enrolled in each American Job Center program



Source: 2020 grantee survey, question E5: “What percent of participants are co-enrolled in the following employment services...?”.

Note: Sample includes 147 grantees. Participants could be co-enrolled in more than one AJC program; therefore, grantees reported the percentage of participants co-enrolled in each separate program.

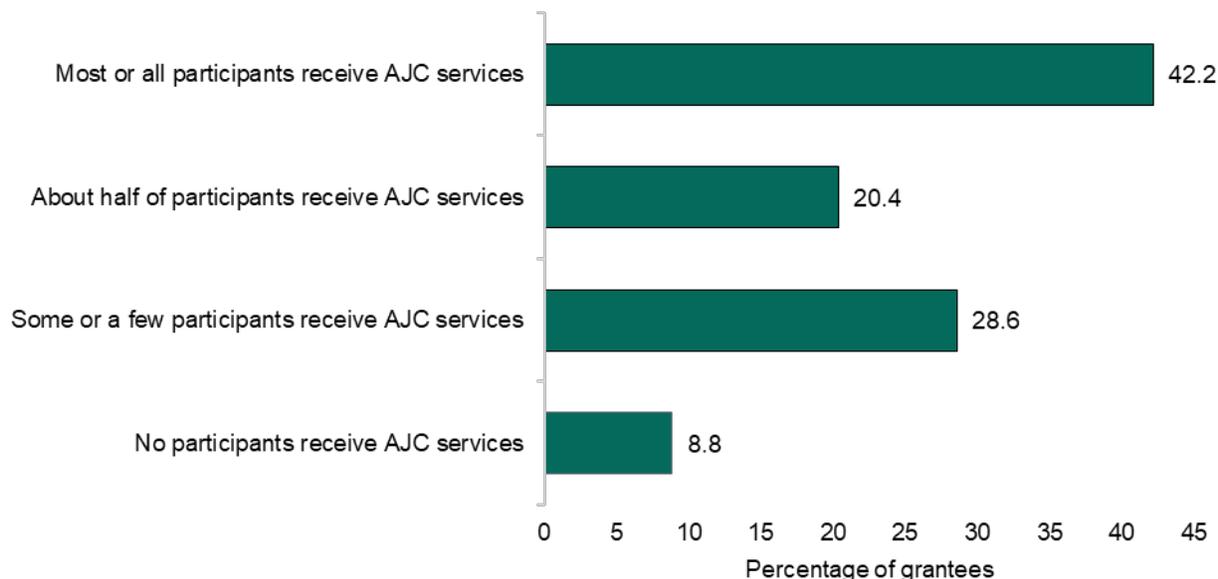
DVOP = Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program; HVRP = Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program; LVER = Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives; WIOA = Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

2. What percentage of HVRP participants actually received AJC services, as reported by grantees?

Co-enrollment did not necessarily translate to using AJC services. Although 42 percent of surveyed grantees reported that most or all of their participants received services at the AJC, 37 percent reported that few or none of their participants received services (Figure 2).

The study’s site visits to eight grantees and their partners indicated two general models for providing complementary employment services to HVRP participants, with grantees relying on either the AJC, or the grantee agency’s own in-house services. In the three site visit communities where HVRP grantees offered a comprehensive set of in-house services, grantee informants said that their agencies could meet a veteran’s needs for employment services through HVRP or other employment services their agency offered. Grantee informants described how their agencies also offered temporary housing assistance, which they reported that HVRP veterans typically co-enrolled in, as well as other supportive services such as legal assistance, help creating and managing a budget, or paying for cell phones. In two of these communities, informants reported that the grantee agency or HVRP itself provided similar education, training, and job placement services as the AJC, and thus did not think the requirement to co-enroll HVRP participants with the AJC had any additional benefit for their participants. In five site visit communities, grantee or AJC informants perceived more advantages for HVRP participants to access complementary services at the AJC, such as faster employment or training for a specific job area. Various local factors may have contributed to these perceptions. For example, in one of the five communities, the HVRP grant was designed to be administered as part of a suite of employment and training services for veterans, including those offered by the AJC. In another, leveraging services provided by the AJC allowed the grantee to allocate HVRP resources to serve veterans across a large geographic area. Thus, in both of these communities, the HVRP and AJC staff collaborated to provide veterans with employment services.

Figure 2. HVRP participants received concurrent employment and training services at the AJC, as reported by the grantees



Source: 2020 grantee survey, question D3: “How many of your HVRP participants concurrently receive employment and training services provided through American Job Center(s)?”

Note: Sample includes 147 grantees.

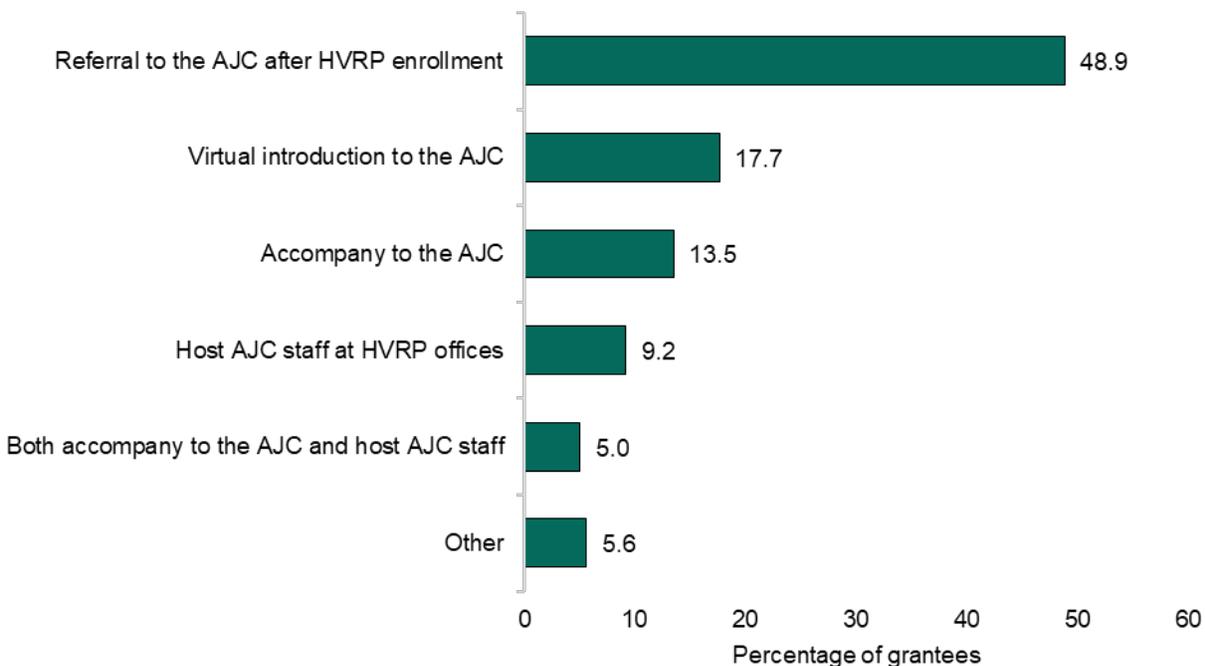
AJC = American Job Center; HVRP = Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program.

3. What processes did grantees use to co-enroll HVRP participants in a program at the AJC?

HVRP participants’ enrollment at the AJC occurred in multiple ways. Many grantees (49 percent) made a referral to the AJC (Figure 3). Other grantees reported providing a virtual introduction to the AJC (18 percent), accompanying the participant to the AJC (14 percent), or hosting AJC staff at the HVRP office (9 percent).

In the grantee survey, 85 percent of grantees reported the AJC to be a common referral source (data not shown in the figures). The eight site visit grantees also identified the AJC as a common referral source, with half of the site visit grantees noting that many veterans first sought services from the AJC before enrolling in HVRP. Grantees and AJC informants described how the veterans were screened for barriers to employment, including risk of homelessness, and from that point were typically referred to the DVOP specialist and HVRP, if appropriate. Thus, in these circumstances, a referral from HVRP back to the AJC for co-enrollment was unnecessary.

Figure 3. Main processes for co-enrolling HVRP participants into a program at an AJC, as reported by the grantees



Source: 2020 grantee survey, question B5: “Which of the following is the main process used by your HVRP program to enroll participants into a program at an American Job Center [AJC]?”

Note Sample includes 147 grantees. The total across groups do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

AJC = American Job Center; HVRP = Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program.

Notably, the strategies that grantee survey respondents and site visit grantees reported to co-enroll HVRP participants in an AJC program reflected their practices approximately 8 to 13 months after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person services from the AJC or HVRP may have been limited. AJC and HVRP staff in two site visit communities noted that they were unable to communicate about participants at the start of the pandemic, taking several months to establish the new processes that were in place at the time of the site visits. Grantee informants in two communities also cited turnover of the DVOP role as a challenge to enrolling HVRP participants at the AJC; in three other communities, informants noted that DVOP specialists had been assigned to process Unemployment Insurance claims, which one perceived as diverting their attention from serving veterans. Before the March 2020 start of the pandemic, seven of the site visit communities reported that they had some means of co-enrolling participants through an in-person handoff between AJC and HVRP staff. In three of these communities, grantee and AJC informants described how HVRP and DVOP staff were co-located in at least part of the HVRP service area, which facilitated referrals between the programs.

HVRP and AJC informants in three communities also reported that HVRP participant enrollment in AJC services fell during the pandemic, due to participants’ limited access to and proficiency with technology. Online service enrollment, job searches, and participation in virtual job fairs were not possible for veterans without computers or Internet access. Across all communities, HVRP grantees and their partners noted that the need to engage with services virtually was a barrier for veterans who were accustomed to accessing services in person.

For more information on co-enrollment and implementation of HVRP, see Batko et al. (2022).

Box 1. About the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Evaluation

Authorized by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987, the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) is the only federally funded program focused exclusively on providing employment services to veterans experiencing homelessness. HVRP grantees can be state, local, or tribal governments; local workforce investment boards; or profit or nonprofit organizations. They receive three-year grants, although the second and third years of the grant are awarded based on performance and available funds. In program year 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded 157 HVRP grants (U.S. Department of Labor 2020).

This issue brief is one in a series of briefs that present findings from the HVRP Evaluation, which is being conducted for DOL's Chief Evaluation Office (CEO), in collaboration with DOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). To assess HVRP's impact on employment outcomes, the evaluation consists of two studies: (1) a quasi-experimental impact study using administrative data and (2) a complementary implementation study.

The implementation study, which provided data for this brief, included two data collection activities: (1) a survey of all grantees from program year 2020 and (2) site visits to eight HVRP grantee communities that were deliberately selected to inform the impact study. The survey was administered from October 2020 to January 2021 and 147 grantees (94 percent) took part. The site visit communities were limited to those where the HVRP grantee operated in a state participating in the impact study and had listed an American Job Center (AJC) as a partner agency in their grant application. Site visit grantees were selected to reflect geographic and urban-rural diversity. The site visits, which were conducted virtually from November 2020 through September 2021, included key informant interviews with grantee staff and their program partners reflecting housing, employment, and health sectors, as well as in-depth interviews with 54 veterans who received services from one of the eight selected grantees. More information about the implementation study is in Batko et al. (2022).

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