



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE**

AND

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE (TAG)
REVISED: SEPTEMBER 2015**

"A Team Approach for Providing Employment Services to Veterans with Disabilities"

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) agree that the successful readjustment of Veterans with disabilities into the civilian workforce is a mutual responsibility and concern. In order to advance, improve, and expand employment opportunities for Veterans with disabilities, both agencies met in early 1995 to discuss ways to improve services for their mutual Veteran clients. In August of that year, the first Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the agencies was signed.

Since entering into this agreement, thousands of Veterans with disabilities have benefited from the resulting increased cooperation and coordination between the two federal agencies and staff employed at each State Agency (SA) that receives Jobs for Veterans State Grant funding from VETS. However, as time passed and service delivery systems evolved, it became apparent that there was a need to revisit the MOA and the policies, processes, and procedures for serving Chapter 31 Veterans. As a result, a new MOA was signed by both agencies on October 3, 2005. In the December 2012 report (GAO 13-29), the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommended that the VA/DOL agreement be reviewed and revised as needed.

This updated Technical Assistance Guide (TAG), the VETS 201 Report (rev), and a new National MOA were drafted to address the recommendations in GAO Report 13-29.

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Timeline of Events for the Joint Work Group (JWG)

- 1995 VR&E and VETS concurred that the successful readjustment of Veterans with disabilities into the civilian workforce is a mutual responsibility and concern. The first MOA between VR&E and VETS was signed.
- 2004 The VR&E Task Force was created. The Task Force submitted a recommendation to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) to increase the VR&E program's employment focus, particularly in relation to collaboration with VETS.
- 2005 As service delivery systems evolved, the need to revisit the MOA and the policies, processes, and procedures for serving Chapter 31 Veterans became apparent. In September 2005, GAO provided a report to Congress recommending the improvement of the VR&E program and the partnership with VETS. A new MOA was signed on October 8, 2005.
- 2008 From January through December, VETS and VR&E implemented a demonstration project at eight locations to identify best practices, develop common performance elements, improve reporting processes, identify administrative barriers, and provide training to staff. The TAG was produced.
- 2012 The JWG conducted an electronic survey of 56 VA Employment Coordinators (EC) and 52 VETS State Directors. GAO reported to Congress with recommendations for improvement of the VR&E and VETS program and the partnership (GAO-13-29, December 13, 2012).

Recommendations include:

- Improve reporting on achievement of program performance goals
- Integrate DoD employment initiatives into VA and DOL interagency framework
- Assess program effectiveness
- Improve the guidance provided to staff in the TAG

This TAG describes standard operating procedures for all partners, including VETS, VR&E, and SA staff who work with Chapter 31 Veterans. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of each organization and the processes to be followed to ensure Chapter 31 Veterans achieve successful employment outcomes.

Section I

A Team Approach to Serving Chapter 31 Veterans

Coming together is a beginning.

Keeping together is progress.

Working together is success.

~Henry Ford~

Efficient and seamless service is the common goal and responsibility of interagency staff that provide assistance to Veterans with disabilities, particularly those who receive services through the VR&E Chapter 31 program. These Veterans are seeking guidance and assistance with one of the most important aspects of their lives — finding meaningful employment in a suitable career field. Effective communications and coordinated efforts from all agencies involved will ensure these disabled Veterans receive comprehensive, efficient, caring, and professional service resulting in successful achievement of their goals.

A unified team approach and partnership between VR&E, VETS, and SA staff are fundamental to a seamless, positive experience for Chapter 31 Veterans as they move through evaluation, training, job search, and employment. A true partnership capitalizes on the strengths of the involved agencies and fosters the ideals of exemplary customer service. To that end, and in accordance with each team member's roles and responsibilities:

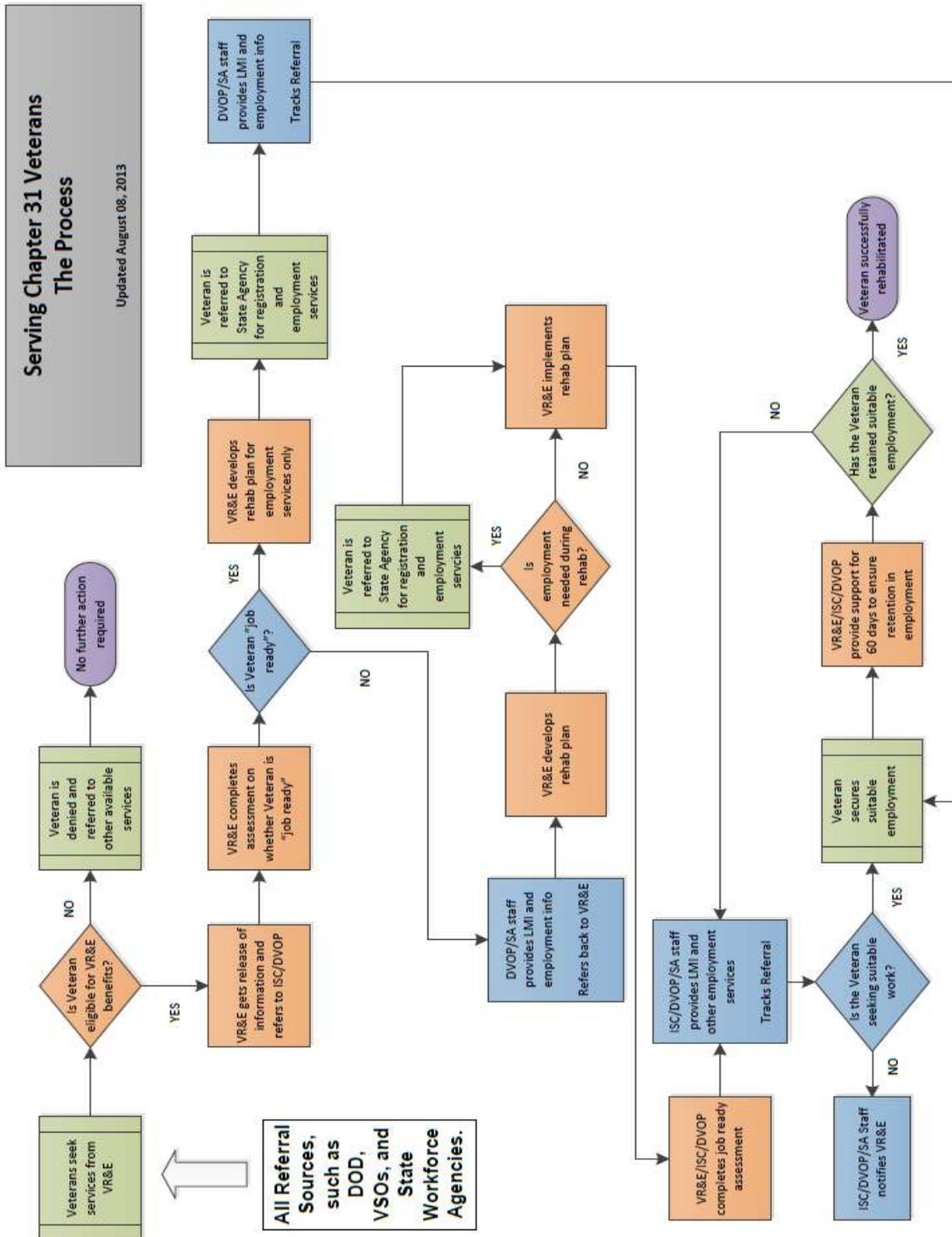
- VR&E, VETS, and SA staff will refer eligible service-connected disabled Veterans to special programs authorized under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Vocational Rehabilitation under 38 United States Code (38 U.S.C.), Chapter 31, and other federal and state programs for employment and training.
- Following VR&E's determination that a Veteran or Servicemember is entitled to Chapter 31 benefits, local VR&E, VETS, and SA staff will coordinate efforts to provide labor market information (LMI), complete rehabilitation planning, assess job readiness, secure suitable employment, and determine rehabilitation status according to their respective Agency roles as stipulated in this TAG.
- VR&E and SA staff will communicate at least monthly to discuss program activities of mutual participants, share information, and report on individual Veterans receiving Chapter 31 benefits. The information exchanged will be used exclusively to facilitate solid rehabilitation planning, job development, and placement services for participating Veterans. All information from interviews, counseling, testing, and assessments will be used by each agency with documented consent from Veterans in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable regulations. Each agency agrees to provide practical and appropriate safeguards to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII) on Chapter 31 Veterans, in accordance with applicable regulations and laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and reauthorizations, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- The VR&E, VETS and SA staff will meet not less than quarterly to review and reconcile the data reported on the VETS 201 Report (see Appendix G) and resolve common concerns. VR&E, VETS and SA staff jointly determine when a Chapter 31 Veteran is ready to seek employment. All partners will focus their efforts and ensure collaboration

with regard to assisting the Veteran in finding and maintaining employment that can be considered suitable employment by the VA.

- The VR&E, VETS and SA staff will use the Veterans Employment Center (VEC) (www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs), as a resource to assist Chapter 31 Veterans in connecting to meaningful career opportunities.

The flow chart on the next page depicts the process for a Veteran served through these joint efforts from the point a Veteran applies for benefits, through determination of eligibility, and development of a rehabilitation plan, and to the ultimate goal of securing suitable employment.

Serving Chapter 31 Veterans – The Process Flow Chart



Section II

Roles and Responsibilities

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Officer (VR&EO), in coordination with the *Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET)*, ensures effective coordination and liaison between SA staff, VETS, and VR&E to implement this agreement.

To that end, the VR&EO or designee will:

- Maintain regular contact and communication with the DVET and appropriate SA staff
- Identify problem areas, work toward their resolution, and render technical assistance as needed
- Distribute, on a quarterly basis, success stories about individual Veterans who have been helped through the program
- When possible, provide the SA Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) assigned to the VR&E Regional Office (RO) work space, telephone and data lines, office supplies, and access to fax, Internet, and the appropriate portion of the VA electronic system
- Provide appropriate training and designate a point of contact within the VR&E office to assist SA staff to ensure effective communication
- Ensure that relevant information is shared with the SA staff to facilitate the Veteran's job search efforts
- Refer Chapter 31 Veterans that will be deemed job ready upon graduation to the assigned SA staff, up to 90 days prior to completion of the course
- Provide SA and VETS staff with timely information relevant to the employment assistance being provided by the SA staff

The DVET is an integral team member who facilitates actions and reporting between the VR&E, ISC, and SA staff. The DVET analyzes data available through the SA, such as case files of VR&E participants, to provide technical assistance and to ensure Veterans enrolled in the Chapter 31 program are being tracked on the VETS 201 Report correctly and are being provided appropriate employment services. These records and files, whether electronic or hardcopy, will be available for review by VETS federal staff.

The DVET will:

- Maintain regular contact and communication with the VR&E and SA staff
- Identify problem areas, work toward their resolution, and render technical assistance as needed and/or appropriate
- Compile and distribute success stories, as appropriate, about individual Chapter 31 Veterans on a quarterly basis
- Facilitate the provision of timely information provided on the VETS 201 Report, ensuring the information is validated by the VR&E staff
- Provide and/or facilitate the provision of local LMI that can be used to develop training programs that have the best probability of employment success for Chapter 31 Veterans

In coordination with the VR&EO and appropriate SA management, the DVET is responsible for ensuring the VR&E staff, ISC, and other SA staff work together for the benefit of Chapter 31 Veterans.

VA VR&E is responsible for the professional execution and completion of Chapter 31 evaluations on behalf of its assigned participants.

- The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) determines whether the Veteran meets the entitlement criteria for Chapter 31 benefits and refers Veterans to the SA staff for LMI to identify appropriate occupational objectives available where the participant plans to seek employment. Further, the VRC assists the Veteran with identified counseling needs and assumes primary responsibility for preparing the participant's rehabilitation plan. VR&E will work in close cooperation with SA staff to identify Chapter 31 Veterans who may benefit from on-the-job training (OJT) or apprenticeship training.
- The VRC will ensure proper evaluations are administered to gain needed insight into the participant's vocational interests, aptitudes, abilities, and limitations. The VRC is the VA case manager for the Chapter 31 Veteran as a rehabilitation plan is developed and implemented.
- The VRC will evaluate, assess, and assist the Veteran in identifying and enrolling in programs within his/her abilities, aptitude, and interests. The programs must be validated by LMI to provide meaningful and realistic opportunities leading to employment.

The Employment Coordinator (EC)/VRC may oversee or provide employment assistance to job-ready disabled Veterans within an assigned VA Regional Office (VARO). The EC/VRC oversees the activities of job readiness, job-seeking services, job development, and job placement that entail consideration of diverse state, regional, and local employment laws and regulations. The EC/VRC also develops employer partnerships to assist in the successful placement of Veterans into job vacancies developed with those employers or identified through networking with SA staff and/or other resources. The EC/VRC further acts as a “primary” consultant to VR&E staff and the employing community.

The EC/VRC will:

- Serve as a “triage” team member to help disabled Veterans identify an appropriate employment track that best meets their needs
- Coordinate and/or perform the Job Readiness Evaluation which will include:
 - Resume preparation
 - Interviewing assistance
 - Career-search activities
 - Discussion of disability and related accommodations
 - Assistive-technology needs
 - LMI/Career Information to use in selecting training and credentialing opportunities
 - Re-employment information, assistance and/or referral to appropriate SA staff
 - Self-directed job search via networking and electronic database
 - Collaboration with the DVET to obtain specific employment opportunities from SA staff that can be matched to a Chapter 31 Veteran
- Market Veterans to employers based on their vocational goals which will include:
 - Identification of key contacts who make hiring decisions

- Identification of staffing patterns and job vacancies
- Identification of employer hiring prerequisites
- Market and provide information such as OJT, Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE), Special Employer Incentive (SEI), and available Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)
- Offer assistance/guidance to employers regarding reasonable accommodation and assistive technology
- Provide Veteran information on DoD-sponsored employment program and other state and federal programs such as the WIA, Heroes 2 Hired (H2H), and VA for Vets, etc.
- Develop partnerships with employers and other agencies to assist Veterans with employment-related services (e.g., the Small Business Administration (SBA), local and state agencies, and private-sector businesses)
- Coordinate efforts to develop and maintain job clubs, job labs, or job-readiness resource rooms for use by the Veterans in job-readiness preparation and self-directed job search
- Engage businesses in the design and delivery of training in the areas of apprenticeships, on-the-job training, internships, and non-paid work experience (Employer Engagement)
- Engage government agencies, employers, and schools in identifying and delivering training that meets the needs of the employer community (Private – Public Partnerships)

The SA is responsible for providing priority services to Veterans in accordance with 38 United States Code (U.S.C.), Chapters 41 and 42, with special emphasis on providing intensive services to Veterans identified as needing services to obtain his/her employment objective. States identify specific categories of Veterans to whom they will target services in their State Plan on Services to Veterans (State Plan). In addition, the SA will manage employer engagement and develop private-public partnerships within the state. In accordance with guidance issued by VETS, the State Plan should identify an ISC as the point of contact for the Chapter 31 program and describe how referred Chapter 31 Veterans will be served by a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist or other appropriate SA staff. Additionally, State Plans should detail services provided to include full access to the resources of the employment service delivery system and focused, intensive services to ensure the Chapter 31 Veteran locates employment compatible with the training provided by the VA that will result in suitable employment.

The SA will appoint a DVOP specialist or other appropriate SA staff to function as the ISC. The ISC and the DVET will work closely with VR&E staff to coordinate employment services for Chapter 31 Veterans. This information will be used to guide Chapter 31 Veterans in selecting appropriate training and credentialing opportunities. Data will be collected on the VETS 201 report, which will provide employment and earnings used to measure program outcomes.

The following criteria apply to SA staff members who work with Chapter 31 Veterans:

- DVOP specialists will provide intensive services and assist Chapter 31 Veterans; in offices where no DVOP is assigned, other SA staff will provide the assistance
- Provide detailed LMI information to the Chapter 31 Veteran and share information with VR&E for use in developing the Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)

- The Individual Employment Assistance Plan (IEAP) will be used by the SA and VR&E in assisting Chapter 31 Veterans to find suitable employment
- For individuals who are within 90 days of completing their IWRP and are referred by the VR&E, the DVOP specialist will register the Chapter 31 Veteran in the SA electronic system and enter all services provided to the Veteran
- Every Chapter 31 Veteran actively seeking work and registered with the SA will be contacted at least once every two weeks to offer service and/or assistance. This contact/service will be recorded in the SA electronic system and case notes. If the Chapter 31 Veteran is not being cooperative, this should be noted in the case notes and on the VETS 201 Report so the VR&E and DVET are advised and can take appropriate action
- Provide job development and placement assistance services which are mandatory services for Chapter 31 Veterans
- Contacts with individual employers on behalf of the Chapter 31 Veteran will be made to secure job or OJT opportunities suitable with the Chapter 31 Veteran's rehabilitation goal(s) and the contact will be recorded in his/her respective case file
- When a Chapter 31 Veteran obtains employment, the ISC will ensure the appropriate information is entered on the VETS 201 Report, including employment date, employer name, job title, and entry hourly wage
- The ISC will provide the VETS 201 Report to the appropriate VR&E staff for review and validation on a quarterly basis
- Upon confirmation from the VR&E staff that the employment is suitable as defined by VR&E, the ISC will ensure the Veteran is monitored for at least 60 days so the VR&E can determine whether or not a Veteran can be considered "rehabilitated." The Veteran's record on the VETS 201 Report will be monitored until closed as determined by VR&E, VETS, and the ISC
- When a Chapter 31 Veteran fails to cooperate or participate with the SA staff in his/her employment activities, that information will be reported to the ISC so the appropriate VR&E staff can be notified and a decision can be made regarding case closure. This information will be recorded on the VETS 201 Report

The ISC serves as the SA's central point of contact for service to VR&E participants. The ISC will facilitate the dissemination of information to, and compile information from, DVOP specialists and other SA staff who serve Chapter 31 Veterans. The ISC serves as the coordination point to communicate information between VR&E staff and the DVET. The ISC should also report this information to the State Veterans Program Coordinator. If the ISC is a DVOP specialist, he/she may also have case management responsibilities.

Every effort will be made to allot space at the VR&E office for the ISC; regardless of his or her physical location, the individual will be supervised by the SA. When co-located in the VARO, the ISC will be provided with suitable office space, computer connectivity, telephone service, and any other assistance needed, to successfully implement a full partnership that ensures Chapter 31 Veterans receive employment services.

The DVOP specialist or SA staff provides direct employment services to Chapter 31 Veterans during the employment phase of rehabilitation. During the evaluation and planning phase, the DVOP specialist or SA staff provides labor market and other pertinent work information prior to development of the IWRP. When Chapter 31 Veterans seek employment while participating in rehabilitation, the assigned DVOP specialist or SA staff will provide job counseling and referral. As the participant nears the end of his/her rehabilitation program, the DVOP specialist or SA staff will follow the IEAP developed by VR&E and provide services such as referral to a job-search workshop, resume assistance, practice interviews, job development, and referrals to suitable jobs in coordination with the ISC, EC, or other appropriate VR&E staff. The VR&E staff will be notified in the event a Chapter 31 Veteran is seeking unsuitable employment.

Section III

The Referral and Rehabilitation Process

The successful readjustment of Veterans into civilian life is a mutual responsibility and concern of VETS, VR&E, and SA staff. To this end, all parties are committed to active cooperation and coordination in the implementation of programs serving Chapter 31 Veterans. Day-to-day coordination requires that personnel from each agency have a fundamental understanding of the services and benefits provided by each agency as well as the basic eligibility criteria for their respective programs to promote complete access to the full range of educational and training opportunities for eligible Veterans.

- A. Initial Rehabilitation Planning – Following VR&E’s eligibility and entitlement determination, the Veteran will be referred to the SA, who will provide LMI and employment opportunities for rehabilitation planning.

The VRC will complete a Referral Form (See Sample Appendix C) to refer a Veteran for the provision of LMI to include preliminary occupational interests and obtain a signed Release of Information (see Appendix D). The Referral Form will provide the following information about the Chapter 31 Veteran to the ISC for LMI or refer the Veteran to the appropriate SA staff for LMI:

- Name
- Date referred and date of next meeting with VRC
- Contact information (address, phone number, email address, etc.)
- Barriers to employment
- Potential career fields identified

The ISC will enter information on the VETS 201 Report for each Chapter 31 Veteran referred by the VRC and assign a DVOP specialist or other SA staff to complete the employment readiness preparation process.

The DVOP specialist or SA staff will contact the Veteran within 10 days and provide services that may include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing the Referral Form (see Appendix C) provided by the VR&E, and providing information on:
 - Labor Market/Career Information to guide veterans in discussing training, credentialing, and employment opportunities
 - Work environment and schedule
 - Qualifications (required work experience, certifications, licensure and education)
 - Duties entailed
 - Occupations requiring similar skills
 - Realistic starting salary and benefits
 - Number of businesses and type of openings in the local area
 - Suggesting part-time jobs and other opportunities the Veteran may pursue during training to enhance employability in the chosen field of work that do not aggravate the Veteran’s service-connected disability

- Sharing information with appropriate VR&E staff

The Veteran will cooperate with the assigned DVOP specialist or SA staff, use the information provided to work with his/her VRC to complete the VR&E rehabilitation planning process, and discuss information that the SA staff submits to VR&E, including:

- A list of career fields that were initially explored
- A list of potential employment goals and the LMI related to each goal

If the Veteran fails to cooperate at any time during the provision of LMI or employment services, the DVOP specialist or SA staff will provide this information to the ISC, VR&E, and the DVET so the team can work together to determine appropriate next steps.

- B. Employment Referral of Job Ready Chapter 31 Veterans Job Readiness Assessment (See Appendix B) and Employment Referral Form (See Appendix C) – Following rehabilitation plan development and/or the provision of training or other services designed to result in job readiness, VR&E and SA staff will coordinate actions to identify activities to place the Veteran in “suitable employment.”

When the VRC determines the Veteran is job ready, the VRC/EC will coordinate referral to the ISC, DVOP specialist, and/or appropriate SA staff. The VRC/EC will forward a Job Readiness Assessment Worksheet along with the Referral Form. The ISC, DVOP specialist, and/or appropriate SA staff will assist the Veteran in beginning an active job search for suitable employment related to his/her vocational rehabilitation goal.

The VRC or EC will obtain a signed VA Form 10-5345, Request for Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information (see Appendix D) and provide the following information about the Veteran to the SA:

- Name
- Date referred
- Contact information (address, phone number, email address, etc.)
- Barriers to employment
- LMI provided at start of plan and after completion
- Rehabilitation plan with identified employment goal

The DVOP specialist or appropriate SA staff member will ensure the Veteran’s registration is completed or re-activated, advise the VRC or EC of the registration, and contact the Veteran within 10 days to confirm the Veteran’s readiness to seek employment in the identified or related field of work. The DVOP specialist or SA staff will provide services to include:

- Job-ready assessment, when needed
- Job-search skills training and job referrals
- Follow-up with the Veteran and respective employers to identify issues and better ensure employment retention
- Notify ISC, VRC, or appropriate SA staff if the Veteran is looking for or seeking unsuitable work
- Provide intensive services

- Document all contacts and outcomes and provide results to the ISC for the VETS 201 Report

The ISC or other SA agency staff will document all data items on the VETS 201 Report (see Appendix G).

The Veteran will cooperate with SA staff as they begin employment placement activities. The SA staff will document services and submit a monthly report to VR&E which includes the following:

- A detailed list of job leads pursued and outcome of job-search activity
- Information on employment accepted, including job title, start date, employer name and address, salary, benefits, etc...

When a Veteran fails to cooperate fully in the rehabilitation process and VR&E has lost contact with the Veteran, information about the Veteran's employment and wages may help to re-establish contact to determine whether further rehabilitation services are needed or whether closure of the case is warranted. If this information is available from the state and state guidance and processes allow this information to be shared, it will be shared with VR&E.

The VRC or EC will document the following:

- Date the Veteran is referred to SA
- Date the Veteran is declared "job ready"
- Contacts with the SA and Veteran
- Date(s) of meeting(s) with the Veteran to follow up or provide further services, employment information, adjustment to employment
- Notification to appropriate SA staff when the Veteran is either rehabilitated or assistance is discontinued

Information Collection and Reporting – VR&E, VETS, and SA Staff have developed a referral document and outlined a process to track and collect data on Chapter 31 Veterans referred to the SA for LMI and intensive employment services. This TAG and attachments include a sample referral document reporting tool (VETS 201 Report) and implementation directions. A signed release of information from the SA to VR&E should be included, if required.

Chapter 31 Veterans Participating in Other Special Programs and Initiatives – Responding to lessons learned from past combat periods, VA and DOL have launched efforts to reach out to the recent conflict Veterans to make sure they are aware of benefits they have earned. Both agencies are committed to a seamless delivery of services and to providing them earlier in the transition process to ease the Veterans' transition to civilian life.

The VA regularly mails information packets to all Servicemembers separating from the military to remind them of eligibility for basic VA benefits, with additional outreach efforts for those recently deployed to theaters of combat. In partnership with state and local government agencies, personnel are assigned to military hospitals with the largest numbers of

casualties to provide one-on-one services that directly connect Veterans with the resources they need when they return home.

Section IV

Data Collection and Reporting (VETS 201 Report)

Precise, detailed, and valid data collection is imperative to monitor success and take corrective actions; therefore, all involved agency staff will work together to carry out the activities and actions described below. Job career results will measure program outcomes through employment and hourly wages and other information as conveyed on the VETS 201 Report.

- The ISC is pivotal in the collection, dissemination, and entry of data on Chapter 31 Veterans receiving employment assistance. The ISC should fully understand the importance of the data collection in support of partnership objectives.
- The ISC will collect and enter all information listed on the VETS 201 Report provided in Appendix H. This data will be gathered from all American Job Centers (AJC) where Chapter 31 Veterans have been referred and registered.
- Each quarter, the ISC will forward the completed VETS 201 Report to the DVET, appropriate SA staff, and appropriate VR&E staff no later than 30 days after the last day of the reporting quarter.
- The DVET, ISC, appropriate SA staff, and appropriate VR&E staff will reconcile the data within five working days.
- The DVET will email the reconciled VETS 201 Report to vets-vre@dol.gov with a copy to the ISC, appropriate SA staff, and the appropriate VR&E staff for inclusion in the Jobs for Veterans State Grant quarterly report
- The VETS members on the JWG Data Analysis Team will share a copy of each VETS 201 Report sent to the VETS-VRE email box with the VR&E members on the JWG Data Analysis Team. A report analysis, along with any issues identified by the JWG Data Analysis Team, will be shared with the JWG membership during the monthly meeting following the end of the reporting quarter to determine appropriate next steps.

VETS 201 Report Data Specifications (Appendix G):

The VETS 201 Report is a quarterly tracking report in an electronic Excel workbook. When completed, the user will find the following entry instructions imbedded/highlighted within the cells in each column or a dropdown menu will appear from which to select one of the appropriate codes:

Column A: VARO: Enter the three-digit code for the VA regional office from which the Veteran was referred

Column B: Last Name: Enter the referred Veteran's last name

Column C: First Name: Enter the referred Veteran's first name

Column D: ID Number: Enter a four digit unique identifier

Column E: Carry-in: If the Veteran was registered last fiscal year (FY) and carried in, enter a "Y" in this column; otherwise, leave blank

Column F: VRC/EC Name

Column G: Employment Goal

Column H: Date Referred to SA

Column I: Referral Type (initial LMI or employment services)

Column J: DVOP or SA Staff Assigned

Column K: Date 1st Service Provided by SA After the Referral

Column L: Date Entered Employment

Column M: Employment Considered Suitable (Y/N)

Column N: Employer

Column O: Job Title

Column P: Hourly Wage

Column Q: Date the Employment Information was provided to VR&E

Column R: Date Joint Responsibility is Complete

Column S: Closure Reason

D = Financial Disincentive to Work; refers to a Veteran who is receiving government benefits, and would have those benefits reduced or terminated upon returning to work. Examples include: Individual Un-Employability Social Security, Workers Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, and the inability to match current salary. Transportation costs may also be a barrier.

E = Satisfied with Unsuitable Employment; refers to a Veteran who is satisfied with employment that is not considered suitable by VR&E. This includes employment that VR&E may consider a Maximum Rehabilitation Gain (MRG closure).

F = Family Responsibilities; refers to any domestic duty which limits the Veteran's available time, resources, or capabilities. Examples include: Elder Care, Child Care, Family Health, Pregnancy, Spouse Relocation, and Divorce.

L = Initial Labor Market Information (LMI); Chapter 31 applicants referred to SA staff for LMI and other career information during the evaluation phase for documentation to support the

Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). (Does not include LMI provided after a participant has been enrolled in VR&E.)

M = Medical Reasons; the exacerbation of a personal disability. Examples include: chronic problem that is preventing further work; condition that may have worsened so that the individual is unemployable; medical treatment or condition that interferes with job-search activities; Veteran has been transferred to the Independent Living Program; Veteran has entered inpatient substance abuse treatment or psychiatric treatment.

N = Not Satisfied with Services; refers to a Veteran who has stated that he/she is unsatisfied with the services provided under the VR&E program. Examples include: Veteran is unsatisfied with the job leads that were provided; felt that they were forced into their occupational choice; labor market required further certification or education but the VA was not willing to sponsor further training; Veteran has not received adequate feedback from their VR&E/SA points of contact. (When appropriate, all agencies involved should collaborate to determine what led to the issue and devise a means to prevent the same issue occurring in the future.)

Other = Enter the number of the category that best fits the closure reason:

1. Veteran has been in Job Ready Status for the maximum 18 months as determined by VR&E
2. Incarcerated
3. Pursuing Self Employment
4. Returned to Active Duty
5. Death
6. Other

R = Rehabilitated; refers to a Veteran who has entered and maintained suitable employment for at least 60 days after the VR&E staff has been notified of the employment and is considered rehabilitated by the VR&E staff.

S = School / Continuing Education; refers to a Veteran who is involved in specialized training and/or education services.

T = Moved Out of State; refers to a Veteran who has moved to another state.

U = Unable to Locate Veteran / Veteran Unresponsive; agency staff are unable to locate the Veteran's whereabouts and any attempts to communicate are unsuccessful. Examples include: a Veteran who won't respond to any correspondence or communication; Veterans trying to get their rating increased; Veteran wanted education but had no desire to go back to work; or Retiree using the program to supplement their income.

X = Unwilling or Unable to Relocate for Employment; refers to a Veteran that has limited opportunities for employment within his or her local labor market and is unable or unwilling to relocate. Examples include: Veteran was committed to relocation during the development of his/her IWRP but is no longer willing to relocate or the labor market conditions have changed since their enrollment but they are not willing to relocate to find suitable employment.

Column T: Notes and/Comments; enter information applicable to the Veteran's employment assistance process.

Section V

Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

This section of the TAG provides the foundation for a successful Chapter 31 program by outlining the roles and responsibilities of each member of the VR&E, VETS, and SA team and describing the processes used for referral and tracking. A local memorandum of understanding (MOU) is developed to identify key staff by name, provide contact information, outline specific responsibilities for these key staff, and agree to any local specific processes unique to their respective locations.

The MOU template outline provided in Appendix A describes the main areas that must be included in each local MOU. Key VR&E, VETS, and SA staff should work together to describe additional responsibilities for each staff member and the processes to be used in the respective locations.

Each header identified in the template is a requirement in the final MOU, but should not be seen as all-inclusive. The partners will agree on specific details for each header and include that in the final MOU. For States with multiple locations, the DVET, in coordination with VR&E, will determine whether to develop separate MOUs for each location or a single MOU covering all locations will be prepared for signature.

Section III – “Responsibilities” outlines the basic roles for each agency representative within the partnership that provides services to Chapter 31 Veterans. The template provides a summary of the topic areas that the Local MOU should address more specifically for each of the following partners:

- The Director for Veterans’ Employment and Training (DVET)
- The State Veterans’ Program Coordinator (VPC)
- The Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC)
- The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist or other State Agency (SA) staff
- The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Officer (VR&EO)
- The VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E); Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC); Counseling Psychologist (CP); and Employment Coordinator (EC)

Section VI

Redress Procedures

Issues that arise between VETS, SA, and VR&E staff with the potential to impact the effectiveness of this partnership or the quality of service delivery to Veterans will be addressed and resolved immediately at the local level. If resolution cannot be reached locally, the issue will be appropriately routed through respective agency channels for resolution. More specifically, the proper channels for resolution can be described as follows:

If the issue cannot be resolved at the EC/VRC and DVOP specialist level, the EC/VRC will forward the matter to his/her VR&EO, while the DVOP specialist will forward the matter to the ISC, State VPC and/or appropriate person in the SA, and the DVET. The VR&EO, SA, and DVET will work to resolve the issue at their level.

If the issue remains unresolved, then the VR&EO will forward the issue to his/her Regional Office (RO) Director and the DVET to his/her Regional Administrator (RAVET). Should the issue remain unresolved, the RO Director and RAVET will forward the issue to the JWG, via their respective Co-Chair for final resolution. The decision of the JWG, in concert with each agency's respective leadership, will be final.

Appendix A
Local Memorandum of Understanding Template
Section I

Purpose

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service, the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), and the federally funded State Agency (SA) partners agree that the successful readjustment of disabled Veterans into the civilian workforce is a mutual responsibility and concern. In order to advance, improve, and expand the employment opportunities for Veterans with disabilities, all parties of this memorandum of understanding (MOU) commit themselves to active cooperation and coordination in meeting the goals set forth in this agreement.

References

This agreement is authorized in accordance with Chapters 31 and 41 of Title 38 United States Code (38 U.S.C. 31 and 41).

Scope

VR&E, VETS, and SA agree to provide a seamless employment transition that will eliminate duplication, fragmentation or delay in delivery of employment services leading to the ultimate goal of successful career selection, placement, and rehabilitation for Veterans enrolled in the Chapter 31 program.

Section II

Cooperating Agencies

The undersigned parties to this agreement represent the VR&E Division of the {Insert Location} VA Regional Office, {Insert State} VETS office, and {Insert SA Name}.

Section III

Referral Process

An effective and efficient referral process has been cited by all partners as one of the keys to the success of this interagency effort. It is essential that the agency making the referral and the agency receiving the referral develop and implement specific standards for coordinated service delivery to Veterans.

Relationships and Responsibilities

The Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) is the link between the VR&E Division and the SA that provides employment services. He/she coordinates efforts by all involved parties to ensure this agreement is implemented with effective coordination and liaison.

The DVET will:

- Communicate and coordinate activities with VR&E and SA staff
- Provide technical assistance to improve the program and activities to resolve procedural issues
- Identify activities to resolve complaints from Chapter 31 Veterans
- Assist in the coordination of professional training for SA staff from the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) and other sources, as appropriate
- Reconcile and distribute the VETS 201 Report
- Report and share Chapter 31 Veterans' success stories
- Conduct and facilitate quarterly meetings with SA staff and VR&E to ensure that program objectives are being met
- Monitor SA efforts toward filling the ISC position, ensuring that all staff openings that impact this agreement are filled in an expedient manner
- Share information with VR&E
- Provide local labor market information through coordination with SA staff to VR&E that can be used to develop training objectives that have the best probability of resulting in positive employment outcomes

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Officer (VR&EO) is VA's link between the DVET and the VR&E office. He/she ensures effective coordination and liaison between the DVET, SA, and VR&E staff to implement this agreement.

The VR&EO or his/her representative will:

- Communicate and coordinate activities with the DVET and SASWIB/AJC
- Provide technical assistance to improve the program and activities to resolve procedural issues
- Attend the quarterly meetings facilitated by the DVET
- Work with the DVET to obtain labor market information and specific employment opportunities from SA staff that can be matched with participating Veterans
- Report and share Chapter 31 Veterans' success stories
- Provide work space and supplies to SA staff assigned to the VR&E office (which may include office or work space, telephone, fax and data lines, normal office supplies, Internet access, and appropriate access to the VA electronic system)
- Facilitate professional training for SA staff from VA sources
- Referral of Chapter 31 Veterans deemed job-ready to the assigned SA staff
- Provide notification to the SA staff at least 90 days prior to a Veteran completing Chapter 31 training, or immediately, in the case of the eligible Veteran being assigned to employment-related service for direct placement

- Designate and assign VR&E staff to coordinate activities with SA staff and implement procedures established in the Technical Assistance Guide (TAG)
- Reconcile and validate the information included on the VETS 201 Report

The VR&E Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Counseling Psychologist (CP), or Employment Coordinator (EC) is the primary point of contact for referrals within VR&E.

The VR&E VRC/CP/EC will:

- Facilitate timely provision of all information relative to employment issues for Chapter 31 Veteran to the SA staff on a continual basis until the Veteran becomes employed, including information regarding job placement when reported by the Veteran
- Participate in VR&E Employment Readiness Workshops and the VR&E Job Lab
- Report VR&E procedural problems to the VR&EO
- Identify activities that help the Veteran determine an appropriate employment or training plan, to include apprenticeship, On-the-Job training (OJT), and non-paid work experience
- Assist and refer Veterans who desire employment while completing their rehabilitation plan
- Secure suitable employment for referred Veterans consistent with their rehabilitation plan
- Provide notification to the SA staff at least 90 days prior to a Veteran completing Chapter 31 training, or immediately, in the case of the Veteran being assigned to employment service for direct placement services
- Include in the rehabilitation plan an employment objective requiring Veterans who need employment services to be referred to the SA; payment of Employment Adjustment Allowance (EAA) is contingent upon compliance as outlined in the Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)
- Leverage other agencies and resources to enhance employment opportunities for Chapter 31 Veterans

The SA Veterans Program Coordinator (VPC) or similarly designated position helps to ensure effective coordination and liaison between the DVET, VR&E staff, and SA staff to include the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist and other SA staff who implement this agreement.

The SA VPC will:

- Provide programmatic supervision of the SA Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC)
- Coordinate with the DVET on staffing levels at VR&E locations and work to ensure that all open positions that impact this agreement are filled on a priority basis
- Communicate and coordinate activities with the DVET and VR&E staff
- Share information with VETS and VR&E staff
- Provide necessary training and/or technical assistance to the ISC, DVOP specialist, and SA staff supporting this agreement
- Attend the quarterly meetings facilitated by the DVET
- Provide technical assistance to improve the program and activities to resolve procedural issues
- Facilitate job search and placement activities for Chapter 31 Veterans statewide

The ISC, who may be out-stationed at the VA Regional Office, is the primary point of contact for Chapter 31 referrals to the SA.

The ISC will:

- Provide VR&E case managers with current LMI as it pertains to specific cases
- Refer Chapter 31 Veterans entering the job-search phase of rehabilitation to appropriate SA staff
- Monitor and assess services provided to Chapter 31 Veterans by SA staff
- Coordinate and support outreach activities with employers, apprenticeship programs, and other training sites in an effort to increase employment opportunities for Veterans participating in the Chapter 31 program
- Collect and tabulate monthly case-management reports from SA staff who provide employment services to Chapter 31 Veterans on a monthly basis
- Act as a liaison between SA and VR&E staff
- Report VR&E procedural problems to the appropriate VR&E, SA, and VETS staff, including the VPC
- Coordinate, reconcile, and distribute the Chapter 31 VETS 201 Report on a quarterly basis

DVOP specialists and SA staff provide intensive services to Veterans participating in the Chapter 31 program. Additionally, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff and other SASWIB/AJC staff provide outreach and assistance to employers on behalf of Veterans with service-connected disabilities.

The DVOP specialists and other SA staff will:

- Participate in VR&E Employment Readiness Workshops and the VR&E Job Lab
- Assist VR&E and the Veteran in determining an employment or training plan, to include apprenticeship and on-the-job training
- Coordinate Chapter 31 Veteran participation in outreach activities with employers, apprenticeship programs, and other training sites that are coordinated by other SA staff to increase employment opportunities for Veterans participating in the Chapter 31 program
- Provide job development
- Maintain bi-weekly contact with Chapter 31 Veterans who have completed their training and are referred from VR&E for employment services
- Provide the ISC a monthly progress report no later than the end of the first week of the month, to include number of contacts, job referrals, job developments, and other issues encountered in providing employment services to Chapter 31 participants
- Leverage other agencies and resources to enhance employment opportunities for Chapter 31 Veterans
- Assist Veterans seeking employment while completing their rehabilitation plan
- Create and maintain case files for referred job-ready Chapter 31 Veterans
- Assist the Chapter 31 Veteran to secure suitable employment as identified by VR&E for referred Veterans
- Provide quarterly updates to the VETS 201 Report to the ISC
- Notify VR&E and the ISC when a Chapter 31 Veteran may be seeking employment that the VR&E cannot consider as suitable employment

Orientation, Staff Training, and Development

The VR&E, DVET, and S agree to train newly assigned staff on the procedures established in the TAG to ensure effective implementation of this agreement.

Exchange of Information

VR&E, DVET, and SA will share information relevant to finding or developing employment opportunities for Chapter 31 Veterans. Enhancing these relationships will make it more likely that Veterans with disabilities are directed into short-term occupational training programs that can get them into high-demand job faster. All information from interviews, counseling, testing, and assessment will be used by each agency under documented consent from the Veteran participant in accordance with applicable privacy statutes such as the Privacy Act, 38 U.S.C. Sec 7332. The Veteran's written consent should accompany the exchange of information in the form of a VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health information.

Cooperation on Emphasis under Federal Contracts

VR&E supports the SA's role to assist federal contractors who are required to list jobs with AJCs under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. §. 4212, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1994 (PL 103-446) and the Jobs for Veterans Act (PL 107-288). The SA and VETS will employ all resources available to identify and contact federal contractors for the purpose of offering assistance to contractors to employ service-connected disabled Veterans.

Relationships on Veterans' Reemployment Rights

Under the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994, the U.S. Department of Labor, through VETS offices located in each state, will assist Veterans making claims under USERRA. The law provides for enhanced protection for Veterans with disabilities, including the requirement that employers make reasonable efforts to accommodate for a disability. VR&E and the SA will refer Veterans making a claim under USERRA to VETS. If necessary, VETS will investigate or adjudicate claims under USERRA, as provided by law.

Coordination of Counseling, Training, and Job Placement

In recognition that coordination is a key element to success, VR&E, VETS, and SA staffs agree to work as a team to ensure the fullest integration throughout all phases of the rehabilitation process.

Appendix B

Job Ready Assessment Worksheet Sample

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E)
Job Ready Assessment Worksheet

Completed by VRC/CP and Veteran Prior to “Job Ready” Determination

Job Readiness Assessment Checklist	
Date	
Individual's Name	
Claim Number	
VA Case Manager	
Last Direct VA Contact	
Targeted Employment Goal	
Job Title(s) Considered	
Type, Location, and Date of Degree(s) and/or Certification(s)	
Veteran contact and dependent info complete and current?	
Veteran's preferred method of contact (email vs. phone)	
IWRP dates current?	
IWRP complete in CWINRS and CER?	
Rapid access to employment?	

Job Seeking Skills	Yes	No	N/A
1. Individual has an acceptable working resume.			
2. Individual has cover letter(s) and thank you letter(s).			
3. Individual has developed interviewing skills and knows to address an employer's needs during the interview.			
4. Individual is able to perform an independent job search.			
5. Individual is able to identify potential employers related to his/her transferable skills.			
6. Individual is able to identify potential employers related to his/her vocational goal(s).			
7. Individual understands how to network (job fairs, classmates, instructors, professional memberships, family, neighbors, acquaintances, etc.).			
8. Individual is actively job searching. Explain when individual last applied for jobs, attended job fair, or attended job interview in comments section.			
9. Other/Job Applications (Specify)			

Employment Attitudes and Behaviors	Yes	No	N/A
1. Individual has appropriate interpersonal relationship skills.			
2. Individual has appropriate work attitude, motivation, and job search commitment.			
3. Individual has suitable personal appearance and hygiene.			
4. Individual has obtained appropriate interview attire.			
5. Individual has demonstrated dependability and was cooperative throughout program.			
6. Individual is medically (mentally and physically) stable to participate in job activities and retain employment.			
7. Individual has suitable self-advocacy skills.			
8. Individual understands employment hours, salary, travel expectations of job, and benefits.			
Transportation/Housing/Financial/Legal	Yes	No	N/A
1. Individual has suitable and reliable transportation.			
2. Individual needs job on a bus route.			
3. Individual has clean driving record and driver's license.			
4. Individual has suitable housing.			
5. Individual has sufficient financial resources to look for work.			
6. Individual has good credit history.			
7. Individual has developed and is following a budget.			
8. Individual is in need of financial counseling.			
9. Individual can pass employer drug test.			
10. Individual actively in need of and receiving medical treatment.			
11. Does individual have legal history?			
12. Individual has child care arrangements in place.			
Career Preparation Activities	Yes	No	N/A
1. Individual has completed goals and objectives of his/her rehabilitation plan.			
2. Individual has training and/or education to obtain and retain employment. Proof of graduation obtained.			
3. Individual has been referred to DOL/VETS program (DVOP/LVER).			
4. Individual has registered with School Placement and/or Career Counseling Office(s).			
5. Individual currently or in need of placement assistance with ACCES VR or VA contract services?			
6. Individual has completed an internship, co-op, or Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE).			
7. Individual has transferable skills from military, volunteer, or civilian work, including special projects.			
8. Individual has obtained the required work certifications and/or licensing to work (e.g., teaching certifications, nursing licensure, CDL license, etc.).			

9. Individual aware of impact of income on SSDI, SSI, Individual Unemployability (IU), and retirement income?				
10. Individual is registered on VetSuccess.gov, has an appropriate resume, and has posted the resume on VetSuccess.gov.				
11. Individual has completed application for 55-b/c.				
12. Individual has received 55-b/c certificate. Date of certificate _____				
Other Factors		Individual Response		N/A
1. Minimum income needed (per month):				
2. Distance willing to commute:				
3. Individual's willingness to relocate:				
4. Hours the individual is willing to work:				
5. Part time? Full time? Shift work? Days?				
6. Minimum benefits required:				
7. SSDI,SSI, IU benefits limit income				
8. Computer literate for specific job goal				
9. Individual needs extensive employer and/or job development				
Job Readiness Declarations			Yes	No
1. This Veteran is Declared Job Ready				
2. This Veteran is <i>NOT</i> Declared Job Ready				
Comments: <i>(Explain deficiencies/strengths/barriers. If Veteran is working presently, even if unsuitable, gather information, such as hours, place of employment, duties, and contact information.)</i>				
Case Manager's Signature			Date	

Appendix C

Referral Letter Sample



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA Regional Office
«ROAddress»

«CurrentDate»

[FullName of DVOP/LVER]
[DVOP/LVER MailingAddress]

In Reply Refer to:
«ROStationNumber»/28
«ClaimPayee»

Dear [DVOP/LVER FullName]:

I am providing this letter to introduce [Veteran's Full Name] who is seeking employment as a «RehabPlanGoal» and is currently participating in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. This letter describes:

- When the Veteran should contact your office
- The reports we need from you regarding the Veteran's progress

Assisting the Veteran with Employment

We asked «LastName» to contact your office by [Date]. I appreciate your efforts in assisting us with this Veteran's search for employment as a [RehabPlanGoal]. I will be working closely with you in assisting [LastName] to obtain suitable employment that:

- Does not aggravate his/her service-connected disability condition(s)
- Uses the training and/or education provided by the VA

Reporting the Veteran's Progress

Please contact me at «CaseMgrPhone» or by email at «CaseMgrEmailAddress» regarding the following information:

1. The date you met with the Veteran following your initial interview
2. Notification if Veteran does not make contact with you
3. A brief written report regarding the Veteran's activities and progress in his/her employment search for each month
4. Information once the Veteran obtains suitable employment, to include:

- Veteran's employment title and job description
- Name and address of Veteran's employer
- Name and telephone number of Veteran's supervisor
- Veteran's monthly salary, excluding overtime pay
- The need for workplace accommodations
- Other employment benefits, such as paid vacation, medical and dental insurance, childcare, the option to telework, etc.

Sharing Veteran's Information

Enclosed is the Veteran's signed permission form to share [his/her] information. This information is confidential and should be used accordingly. All aspects of the Veteran's employment search are important. Please keep appropriate documentation so that together we may assist the Veteran in successfully achieving [his/her] vocational goal.

Additionally, I've enclosed a form that you may use to provide us with the information requested above.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

«CaseMgrName»

«CaseMgrTitle»

Enclosures:

Veteran's Signed Release of Information
Veteran's Progress Report

VETERAN'S PROGRESS REPORT

DVOP/LVER EMPLOYMENT SEARCH REFERRAL

Date:

DVOP/LVER Name:

VR&E Case Manager's Name:

Veteran's Full Name:

Veteran's Vocational Goal:

Did the Veteran register with your office? Yes No

What was the date of your first interview with the Veteran? _____

How may I help you coordinate employment search efforts for this Veteran?

Please provide a brief summary of your contact with this Veteran:

Appendix D

OMB Number: 2900-0260
Estimated Burden: 2 minutes

Department of Veterans Affairs		REQUEST FOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE MEDICAL RECORDS OR HEALTH INFORMATION	
<p>Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Information: The execution of this form does not authorize the release of information other than that specifically described below. The information requested on this form is solicited under Title 38, U.S.C. The form authorizes release of information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332 that you specify. Your disclosure of the information requested on this form is voluntary. However, if the information including Social Security Number (SSN) (the SSN will be used to locate records for release) is not furnished completely and accurately, Department of Veterans Affairs will be unable to comply with the request. The Veterans Health Administration may not condition treatment, payment, enrollment or eligibility on signing the authorization. VA may disclose the information that you put on the form as permitted by law. VA may make a "routine use" disclosure of the information as outlined in the Privacy Act systems of records notices identified as 24VA19 "Patient Medical Record - VA" and in accordance with the VHA Notice of Privacy Practices. You do not have to provide the information to VA, but if you don't, VA will be unable to process your request and serve your medical needs. Failure to furnish the information will not have any affect on any other benefits to which you may be entitled. If you provide VA your Social Security Number, VA will use it to administer your VA benefits. VA may also use this information to identify veterans and persons claiming or receiving VA benefits and their records, and for other purposes authorized or required by law. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to notify you that this information collection is in accordance with the clearance requirements of section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. We anticipate that the time expended by all individuals who must complete this form will average 2 minutes. This includes the time it will take to read instructions, gather the necessary facts and fill out the form.</p>			
ENTER BELOW THE PATIENT'S NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER IF THE PATIENT DATA CARD IMPRINT IS NOT USED.			
TO: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (Print or type name and address of health care facility)		PATIENT NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	
Department of Veterans Affairs, VR&E (address of Regional Office)		<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
		<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION, INDIVIDUAL OR TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE RELEASED			
Work-Force One-Stop Career Center, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP)			
VETERAN'S REQUEST: I request and authorize Department of Veterans Affairs to release the information specified below to the organization, or individual named on this request. I understand that the information to be released includes information regarding the following condition(s):			
<input type="checkbox"/> DRUG ABUSE <input type="checkbox"/> ALCOHOLISM OR ALCOHOL ABUSE <input type="checkbox"/> TESTING FOR OR INFECTION WITH HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) <input type="checkbox"/> SICKLE CELL ANEMIA			
INFORMATION REQUESTED (Check applicable box(es) and state the extent or nature of the information to be disclosed, giving the dates or approximate dates covered by each)			
<input type="checkbox"/> COPY OF HOSPITAL SUMMARY <input type="checkbox"/> COPY OF OUTPATIENT TREATMENT NOTE(S) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify)			
Copy of Veteran's IWRP, IEAP, Military Services information, civilian employment information, pertinent work restrictions, VA disability rating %.			
PURPOSE(S) OR NEED FOR WHICH THE INFORMATION IS TO BE USED BY INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE RELEASED			
To assist the Veteran and the Department of Veterans Affairs with Rehabilitation and employment services to the veteran.			
NOTE: ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INFORMATION DESIRED MAY BE LISTED ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM			
AUTHORIZATION: I certify that this request has been made freely, voluntarily and without coercion and that the information given above is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after I sign it. I may revoke this authorization, in writing, at any time except to the extent that action has already been taken to comply with it. Written revocation is effective upon receipt by the Release of Information Unit at the facility housing the records. Redisclosure of my medical records by those receiving the above authorized information may be accomplished without my further written authorization and may no longer be protected. Without my express revocation, the authorization will automatically expire: (1) upon satisfaction of the need for disclosure; (2) on <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/> (date supplied by patient); (3) under the following condition(s):			
This authorization expires 5 years from the date of signature or end of rehabilitation services, whichever occurs first.			
I understand that the VA health care practitioner's opinions and statements are not official VA decisions regarding whether I will receive other VA benefits or, if I receive VA benefits, their amount. They may, however, be considered with other evidence when these decisions are made at a VA Regional Office that specializes in benefit decisions.			
DATE <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	SIGNATURE OF PATIENT OR PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SIGN FOR PATIENT (Attach authority to sign, e.g., POA)		
FOR VA USE ONLY			
IMPRINT PATIENT DATA CARD (or enter Name, Address, Social Security Number)		TYPE AND EXTENT OF MATERIAL RELEASED	
		DATE RELEASED	RELEASED BY

Appendix E

Common Terminology

Case Management: Case management is a process. In this process, there is one case manager, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC)/Counseling Psychologist (CP) and one plan of action. The Veteran and the case manager (VRC/CP) develop this plan with input from other knowledgeable persons. The ultimate goal is the achievement of the Chapter 31 Veteran's suitable employment goals. There can be other individuals or agencies that act as service providers assisting the Veteran and the case manager with specific issues or barriers. It is imperative that everyone working with the Veteran has an understanding of, and is in agreement with, the goals of the Veteran. A collaborative approach and use of the whole person concept is imperative.

Case Manager, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC)/Counseling Psychologist (CP): The case manager is the focal point for a Veteran during the rehabilitation process. The case manager (VRC/CP) provides direct services only in those areas he/she has expertise. The Veterans are referred to other individuals or agencies in the case manager's (VRC's/CP's) network for additional specific services. VR&E designates the primary case manager for a Vocational Rehabilitation Chapter 31 Veteran; generally it is the VRC or CP. The Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER), Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist (DVOP), and/or American Job Center (AJC) staff serve as a resource for information and services related to the labor market, job placement preparation, and individualized job development.

Central Point of Contact: The primary function of the SA central point of contact is to serve as a liaison between the SA, VR&E staff and the DVET. In some states the central point of contact may also be the Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) and may be responsible for assigning individual Chapter 31 Veterans to a specific job developer, providing follow-up services, and collecting and compiling data to be shared among agencies. The central point of contact should be involved at the state level in problem identification and issues requiring problem resolution that may arise between the agencies. The responsibilities of the position vary from state to state.

Discontinued: This term refers to the VR&E Chapter 31 participants who are discontinued from the VR&E program by the VRC/CP for a variety of reasons. The termination should be documented and communicated to the SA staff assigned.

Employer Engagement: Engage businesses in the design and delivery of training in the areas of apprenticeships, on-the-job training, internships, and non-paid work experience.

Veterans Employment Center: The Veterans Employment Center (VEC) (www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs) on eBenefits provides Veterans, Servicemembers, and their beneficiaries with a seamless career search experience that connects public and private-sector employers with verified Veterans and family members. This new tool integrates functionality previously found in VetSuccess.va.gov.

Entered Employment: Entered employment is when a Veteran has become employed either by job placement (result of a referral from the Job Service) or by obtained employment (secured by the Veteran after contact with the AJC). Entered employment is not necessarily considered suitable employment for VR&E Rehabilitation purposes. The SA staff cannot deny a qualified Veteran a job referral when he/she requests to be referred to a specific job opening. Entered employment may be an interim position for income maintenance until a suitable job is found or while the Veteran is in training. SA staff should document pertinent information about the job (why and how the Veteran secured the position), then convey this information in writing or by email to the VRC or EC. The job search process should continue until suitable employment is found.

Individual Employment Assistance Plan (IEAP): The IEAP is written by the VRC/CP when the Veteran is considered employable and is, at a minimum, 60 days from beginning his/her job search. The plan takes into account the most current and projected labor market information and defines the vocational goal. The plan can include acquiring tools the Veteran may need in his/her job search, information about employer incentives, or identification of the need for short term training. IEAP goals may be incorporated in an IWRP.

Individualized Job Development: Individualized job development is the process for securing employment for the individual that fits his/her background, training and interests, and does not aggravate an existing disability. Numerous resources are used when providing individualized job development services, job listings at the AJC, local employer hot lines, cold calls to employers, etc. Individualized job development may also include:

- (1) Preparing a Veteran for job interviews
- (2) Negotiating with an employer to hire a Veteran for an existing position
- (3) Negotiating with an employer to create a position that currently does not exist
- (4) Negotiating with an employer to hire a Veteran into a position which exists in the company, but for which there is not a current opening

Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP): The IWRP outlines rehabilitation services including, if appropriate, training to assist Veterans to become employable. The plan takes into account the Veteran's transferable skills, limitations due to disability, functional capacity, test results, work experience, education, military experience, and interests. Analysis of this data and the most current and projected labor market information form the basis of the plan.

Job Lab: Job Labs located at the VR&E field stations provide resources for Veterans to research labor market information, complete resume development, practice interviewing skills, training, and access job leads via the Internet. The Lab provides access to computers with internet capabilities, scan/fax/print equipment, local job postings, and have VR&E staff available to assist.

Job Search Ready/Job Ready: This term refers to Veterans who are determined to be ready, willing, and able to participate in job development activities, but may in fact have issues or barriers to employment such as limited transportation, childcare needs, etc.

Job/Career Results: Measuring program outcomes through employment and hourly wages.

Labor Market/Career Information: Using labor market information and information from State Workforce Investment Boards (SWIB) to guide veterans in selecting training, credentialing, and employment opportunities.

Labor Market Information (LMI): Labor Market Information describes current and projected local, regional, state and national labor markets, such as the number and types of available jobs, their characteristics and training and skills requirements, and the composition and characteristics of the labor supply. Timely, reliable, and readily accessible labor market information (and outcomes) is used to inform the sector, industry or occupational focus of programs and to guide jobseekers in choosing which fields of study, training and credentials to pursue.

Private-Public Partnerships: Engage government agencies, employers, and schools in identifying and delivering training that meets the needs of the employer community.

Referred: Referred is a term used to describe the status of job ready Veterans sent to a local DVOP and/or AJC to receive employment services.

Registered: Registered refers to Chapter 31 Veterans that are referred to a DVOP specialist and/or AJC staff who enroll in the State Workforce Agency's data collection system.

Rehabilitated: Rehabilitated refers to a Chapter 31 Veteran who has entered and maintained suitable employment for at least 60 days. Follow-up contact should be made by the assigned DVOP and/or AJC staff within one week of placement, then at 30 days, and again at 60 days. The results of the follow-up contacts with the employer and the employee should be documented and communicated to the VR&E staff.

Suitable Employment: Suitable employment is a job that the VRC has determined is consistent with the Veteran's interests, aptitude, and abilities, does not aggravate the Veteran's disability, and the Veteran has maintained the job for the minimum of 60 days. The VA VRC will make the determination as to whether or not a job placement is considered to be suitable, based on the rehabilitation plan and consistent with the limitations of the disability. If the job is not suitable, the case is left open with the VRC and/or EC until a suitable placement is found. If the Veteran declines further services from VR&E, the DVOP and/or AJC staff may continue to work with the Veteran as needed.

Appendix F

Acronyms

The following acronyms are used throughout the Technical Assistance Guide:

AJC	American Job Center
CM	Case Manager
CP	Counseling Psychologist
DVET	Director for Veterans' Employment and Training
DVOP	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (Specialist)
EC	Employment Coordinator
GAO	Government Accountability Office
IEAP	Individual Employment Assistance Plan
ISC	Intensive Services Coordinator
IU	Individual Unemployability
IWRP	Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan
LMI	Labor Market Information
LVER	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NVTI	National Veterans' Training Institute
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OFS	Operation Freedom's Sentinel
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OJT	On-the-Job Training
SSN	Social Security Number
SWIB	State Workforce Investment Boards
SA	State Workforce Agency
SCD	Service-Connected Disabled (Veteran)
TAG	Technical Assistance Guide
USC	United States Code
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
VARO	Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office
VETS	Veterans' Employment and Training Service
VOPAR	VETS Operations and Program Activity Report
VPL	Veterans' Program Letter
VRC	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
VR&E	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
VR&EO	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Officer
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WRIS	Wage Record Interchange System
CWINRS	(VR&E) Corporate Case Management System

Appendix H

VR&E 5-Tracks to Employment

Reemployment with Previous Employer

This track is designed for those individuals separating from active duty or in the National Guard or Reserves who are now returning to work for their previous employer. A Rehabilitation Plan with the goal of reemployment may include job accommodations, job modification, case management, coordination and linkages of services with VA health care, reemployment rights advice, work adjustment services, and consultation with the employer. The DVET is also available to assist with any employer issues that may arise regarding the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Rapid Access to Employment

Rapid access to employment is targeted to those individuals who have expressed a desire to seek employment soon after separation or who already have the necessary skills to be competitive in the job market in an appropriate occupation. A Rehabilitation Plan with the goal of immediate employment may include job readiness preparation, resume development, job search assistance, and development of employment resources, job accommodations and post-employment follow-up.

Self-Employment

Self-employment is targeted to individuals who have limited access to traditional employment, need flexible work schedules, or who need a more accommodating work environment due to their disabling conditions or other life circumstances. A Rehabilitation Plan with the goal of self-employment may provide for analysis of the viability of a business concept, development of business plan, training in the operation of small businesses, marketing, and financial assistance, and guidance on obtaining adequate resources to implement the business plan.

Employment through Long Term Services

Long-term services are targeted to individuals who need specialized training and/or education to obtain and maintain suitable employment. A Rehabilitation Plan with the goal of training and/or education may provide for on-the-job training (OJT), apprenticeship, internship, job shadowing, work monitoring, work-study, public-private job partnering, or higher education sufficient to obtain suitable entry-level employment.

Independent Living Services

Independent living services are targeted to individuals who may not be able to work right now and need rehabilitation services to live more independently. A Rehabilitation Plan with the goal of independent living may include assistive technology, independent living skills training, connection to community-based support services, or assistance in obtaining and maintaining volunteer work.

Appendix I

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Checklist

VA Regional Office Location:	
VETS Office Location:	
State Agency (SA) Name:	
Date of the MOU:	

Section I	Yes	No	Comments
Purpose			
Is the language in accordance with the Technical Assistance Guide (TAG)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU include information applicable to local circumstances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
References			
Are any exceptions from the TAG noted in the MOU?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scope			
Does the language address vocational rehabilitation, job placement assistance, and related services within the activity of each agency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section II	Yes	No	Comments
Cooperating Agencies			
Does the MOU ensure that there are coordinated services to Veterans by outlining specific standards for the VA/VR&E making the referral and the SA/ISC in receiving the referral?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the VA Regional Office and location identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the VETS office location identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the SA identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section III	Yes	No	Comments
Referral Process			
Does the MOU identify the referral process the VA office will be using with ISC?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Relationships, Roles and Responsibilities			
Does the MOU describe the Director of VETS' (DVET) role in the following areas:			
a) Communication and coordination activities with VA, VR&E and State Agency (SA) staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Technical assistance to improve the program and activities to resolve procedural issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Activities to resolve complaints from VR&E (Chapter 31) Veterans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Facilitation of professional training for SA staff from National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) and other sources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Reconciliation and distribution of the VR&E Monthly Reports and the quarterly VETS 201 Report?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) How to develop and distribute success stories about individual Veteran helped by participation through the VETS and the VR&E programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Meetings to discuss the progress toward achievement of the objectives of this agreement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h) Information sharing with VR&E staff (VR&E Officer, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, and/or Employment Coordinator)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Does the MOU describe the VR&EO's role in the following areas:	Yes	No	Comments
a) Technical assistance to improve the program and activities to resolve procedural issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) How to develop and distribute success stories about individual Veterans as a result of his/her participation in the VR&E and VETS programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Provision of work space and supplies to SA staff assigned to the VR&E office (which may include office or work space, telephone, fax, normal office supplies, Internet access, and appropriate access to the VA electronic system), if feasible ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Facilitation of professional training for SA staff from VA resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Referral of VR&E Veterans needing job search assistance to the assigned SA Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) or other SA staff (at least 60 days prior to completion of a rehabilitation program)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Designation and assignment of VR&E staff that coordinate activities with SA staff and implement procedures established in the TAG?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Reconciliation of the VETS 201 Report?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h) Information sharing with VETS and SA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

i) Job placement information sharing with SA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Does the MOU describe the VRC's, Counseling Psychologist's (CP), or EC's role in the following areas:	Yes	No	Comments
a) Communication and coordination activities with the DVET and SA Staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Participation in VR&E Job Readiness Workshops and the availability of shared use of VR&E's Job Lab?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Reporting VR&E procedural problems to the VR&E appropriate Staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Services that help the Veteran determine an appropriate employment or training plan, to include apprenticeship and On-the-Job training (OJT)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Services to assist and refer Veterans who desire employment while completing their rehabilitation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Referral of VR&E job ready Veterans to the appropriate VR&E and SA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Efforts to secure suitable employment for referred Veterans consistent with their rehabilitation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h) Networking with other agencies and resources to enhance employment opportunities for VR&E Veterans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Does the MOU describe the SA staff Program Coordinator's (or similarly designated position) role in the following areas:	Yes	No	Comments
a) Functional supervision of the SA ISC?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Communication and coordination activities with the DVET and VR&E staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Information sharing with VETS and VR&E staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Technical assistance to improve the program and activities to resolve procedural issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Activities to facilitate job search and placement activities for VR&E Veterans statewide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU describe the ISC's role in the following areas:			
a) Referral of VR&E Veterans entering the job search phase of rehabilitation to appropriate SA staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Monitoring and assessment of services provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

to VR&E Veterans by SA staff?			
c) Reporting VR&E procedural problems to the appropriate VR&E, SA, or VETS staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Reconciliation and distribution of the VETS 201 Report?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU describe the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist's and other SA staff's role in the following areas:			
a) Participation in VR&E Job Readiness Workshops and the VR&E Job Lab?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Activities that assist VR&E and the Veteran determine an employment or training plan, to include apprenticeship and On-the-Job training (OJT)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Outreach activities with employers, apprenticeship programs, and other training sites to increase job opportunities for Veterans participating in the VR&E program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Network with other agencies and resources to enhance job opportunities for VR&E Veterans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Activities to assist Veterans seeking employment while completing their rehabilitation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Creation and maintenance of case files for referred job ready Veterans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Efforts to secure suitable employment for referred Veterans consistent with their rehabilitation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h) Reconciliation and distribution of the VETS 201 Report?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Orientation, Staff Training and Development			
Does the MOU describe how VR&E, VETS, and SA staff will jointly orient newly assigned staff to the procedures established in the TAG and to provide training needed to ensure effective implementation of the agreement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exchange of Information			
Does the MOU describe how VR&E, VETS, and SA will share information to facilitate job development and placement services to participating Veterans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cooperation on Emphasis under Federal Contracts			
Does the MOU describe how VR&E staff supports the SA's role to assist federal contractors who are required to list jobs with local SA offices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relationships on Veterans' Reemployment Rights			

Does the MOU include language that would maintain an agreement between the VR&E, VETS, and SA to exchange all information relevant to an investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU describe the process VETS and SA staff use to refer Veterans with disabilities to VR&E for assistance with disability related issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Coordination of Counseling, Training, and Job Placement			
Does the MOU contain an agreement for VR&E and SA staff to network with identified liaisons or individual VR&E counselor and/or employment coordinator in order to ensure integration of all phases of the Five Tracks to Employment process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section IV	Yes	No	Comments
Does the MOU contain contact information to include name, title, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU describe attachments, such as forms or other appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Section V	Yes	No	Comments
Does the MOU contain a glossary of terms and definitions to facilitate and establish common understanding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU contain dated signatures of concurrence from all required signatory parties?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the MOU contain language indicating the date it goes into effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Reviewed By:	Agency:	Date Reviewed:
1.			
2.			