



**Annual Report to Congress
Fiscal Year 2016**

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

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Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with Title 38, United States Code, Sections 4107(c), 4212(c), 4215(d), and 2021(d). The report describes the programs and compliance activities of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

PROGRAM YEAR AND FISCAL YEAR

Some of the workforce activities described in this report are provided on a Program Year (PY) basis to align with the DOL Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) program reporting, while others operate on a Fiscal Year (FY) basis. Information collected on a fiscal year basis is presented in this report from 10/1/2015 – 9/30/2016, while data collected on a program year basis is presented from 7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016.

VETS' MISSION STATEMENT

To prepare America's veterans, service members and their spouses for meaningful careers, provide them with employment resources and expertise, protect their employment rights, and promote their employment opportunities.

Executive Summary

In FY 2016, VETS continued to administer programs to meet the employment and training needs of veterans and eligible spouses, especially those with significant barriers to employment, and to connect employers across the country with job-ready veterans. In FY 2014, Congress passed and the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which generally went into effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment.¹ WIOA provides more opportunities for aligning services with the needs of veterans. PY 2015 was the last year for reporting on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) required performance metrics.

The **Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)** program provides funding to states for Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff. DVOP specialists provide intensive services to veterans (now referred to, under WIOA, as individualized career services) with significant barriers to employment, including disabled veterans, and other eligible veterans as determined by the Secretary or through appropriations. Individualized career services include a comprehensive and specialized assessment of skill levels and job training needs, the development of an individual employment plan, group and individual career counseling and planning, and short-term skills development (including interview and communication skills). LVER staff promote the hiring of veterans in communities through outreach activities that build relationships with local employers.

The **Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP)** continues to address employment needs of the most vulnerable veteran population by reintegrating homeless veterans into society and the workforce. As in the past, the HVRP successfully placed over 11,000 previously homeless veterans on a path to self-sufficiency.

¹ Certain WIOA provisions, including provisions relating to the performance accountability system, did not take effect until July 1, 2016. In addition, most of the provisions in title IV, which amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, took effect upon enactment on July 22, 2014.

The **Transition Assistance Program (TAP) DOL Employment Workshop** provides critical assistance to transitioning service members and their spouses by giving them the tools necessary for a successful transition from military to civilian life. The VOW to Hire Heroes (VOW) Act (Title II of P.L. 112-56, enacted in November 2011) mandated that nearly all transitioning service members participate in the Employment Workshop.

In addition, VETS receives and investigates claims arising under the **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994** (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. 4301-4335. USERRA:

- prohibits discrimination against persons because of their service in the military;
- encourages non-career service in the military by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantages to civilian careers and employment which can result from such service;
- minimizes the disruption to the lives of persons performing service in the military, as well as to their employers, their fellow employees, and their communities, by providing for the prompt reemployment of such persons upon their completion of such service; and
- prohibits discrimination against individuals who attempt to enforce their rights under USERRA and prohibits retaliation against those who testify in any proceeding under the Act.

The VETS USERRA Annual Report to Congress includes more detailed information regarding program and enforcement outcomes, and can be found here:

<https://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/>

Under the **Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act** (VEOA), 5 U.S.C. 3330a-3330c, VETS is responsible for investigating claims alleging a Federal agency's failure to apply Veterans' Preference in hiring or during a reduction-in-force, and claims from veterans alleging a lack of access to a Federal agency's covered employment opportunities.

VETS is responsible, under the **Vietnam Era Veterans' Reemployment Assistance Act of 1974** (VEVRAA), 38 U.S.C. 4212(d), for collecting annual reports from Federal contractors regarding the number of protected veterans hired during the calendar year, as well as the number of protected veterans in their employ. Under VEVRAA, Federal contractors and subcontractors who after December 1, 2003, entered into a contract with the government valued at \$150,000 or greater must file an annual report with VETS.²

VETS routinely collaborates with other component agencies within DOL, as well as other Federal agencies, to carry out its programmatic and enforcement activities on behalf of the Nation's service members.

² The Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council's inflationary adjustment of October 1, 2015, raised the threshold to \$150,000. The increase results from an inflationary adjustment provision that authorizes the FAR Council to review and adjust acquisition-related threshold amounts in statutes that apply to federal procurement. See Section 807 of the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act, codified at 41 U.S.C. 1908; see also, *Federal Acquisition Regulation; Inflation Adjustment of Acquisition-Related Thresholds*, 80 Federal Register 38293 (2015), adjusting VEVRAA's procurement related threshold.

I. The Workforce System

VETS coordinates with DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to serve veterans through the public workforce system – a system that supports economic growth and provides workers and employers with critical resources and support to maximize employment opportunities.

Last year, more than 13 million Americans, including nearly 900,000 veterans, received employment assistance through the workforce system. This assistance may include job search services, career planning and counseling, or job training.

Primarily, the workforce system offers assistance through the nationwide network of nearly 2,500 one-stop centers (referred to as American Job Centers, or AJCs), which includes DOL programs as well as other state, local, and Federal partners. Below are the programs administered by DOL:

VETS-Administered Programs

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Program (discussed further beginning on page 6).

ETA-Administered Programs

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs, under WIOA title I (29 U.S.C. 3111 *et seq.*);
- Employment Service Programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA title III (29 U.S.C. 49 *et seq.*);
- Indian and Native American Program, under WIOA sec. 166 (29 U.S.C. 3111 *et seq.*);
- Job Corps, under WIOA sec. 159 *et seq.* (29 U.S.C. 3221);
- National Farmworker Jobs Program, under WIOA sec. 167 (29 U.S.C. 3222);
- YouthBuild, under WIOA sec. 171 (29 U.S.C. 3226);
- Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO), authorized under WIOA sec. 169 (29 U.S.C. 3224) and under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532);
- National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWG), under WIOA sec. 170 (29 U.S.C. 3225);
- H-1B Job Training Programs, authorized under section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 3224a(7));
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 *et seq.*);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 *et seq.*); and
- National Registered Apprenticeship System, registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the National Apprenticeship Act), 20 U.S.C. 50 *et seq.*, or under other criteria established by the Secretary of Labor.

These programs are administered by VETS' workforce partner, ETA, and they are discussed in further detail beginning on page 23 of this report.

PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS IN THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Section 2 of the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) of 2002, as codified in 38 U.S.C. 4215, established “Priority of Service” for veterans in DOL-administered job training programs. This allows veterans and eligible spouses to receive priority access to workforce training programs directly funded, in whole or in part, by DOL. Priority of Service applies both to program participation and access to the full range of services offered by each DOL-funded program. To obtain Priority of Service, a veteran or eligible spouse must meet the statutory definition of a “covered person,”³ as well as other statutory requirements that pertain to the program for which services are sought.

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act amended 38 U.S.C. 4215 to require that this report include an evaluation of whether eligible veterans receive Priority of Service and are fully served when accessing Departmental programs. Under 38 U.S.C. 4215(d), this evaluation must include (1) an analysis of Priority of Service implementation at the local level; (2) an analysis of whether the representation of veterans in DOL programs is proportional to the incidence of representation of veterans in the labor market; and (3) performance measures developed by the Secretary to determine whether veterans are receiving Priority of Service and are being fully served by qualified job training programs.

Veterans participate in workforce programs at roughly the same rate as what is represented in the labor force. In 2016, veterans made up 6.8 percent of the labor force, while accounting for roughly 6.5 percent of the clientele base in the public workforce system; this is discussed in more detail later in this report. Additionally, PY 2015 data shows that 93 percent of covered persons received service within 45 days of application for those services.

In FY 2016, the Department’s Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment and Training Administration, completed the WIA Gold Standard evaluation, which includes supplementary components specifically focused on the service delivery processes for veterans. The study includes analysis of the characteristics, services, and outcomes of all veteran participants of the study sites.⁴ Additionally, the Chief Evaluation Office completed projects on the subjects of: Reemployment Strategies for Army Veterans; Exploratory Analysis of Services and Outcomes of Veteran and Non-Veteran Job Seekers; Military Apprenticeship Evaluation Design Study; Analysis of Characteristics of Programs for Women Veterans; Literature Review of Homeless Veterans; and a Formative Evaluation of the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program and Options for Future Evaluation.

³ The term “covered person” under 38 U.S.C. 4215 means any of the following individuals:

- A veteran.
- The spouse of any of the following:
 - i. Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
 - ii. Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this section, is listed, pursuant to section ⁵56 of title 37 and regulations issued thereunder, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
 - iii. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability.
 - iv. Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

⁴ This report, entitled “Providing Services to Veterans through the Public Workforce System: Descriptive Findings from WIA Gold Standard Evaluation: Volume I and Volume II” was completed in 2015. See:

https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_resultDetails&pub_id=2569&mp

II. Performance Management

VETS programs address the Department's Strategic Objective: *Advance employment opportunities for U.S. workers in 21st century demand sectors and occupations using proven training models through increased employer engagement and partnerships.* As more fully described below, VETS programs have materially contributed to this objective, yielding significant results for veterans and service members who are transitioning to the civilian workforce.

COMMON MEASURES USED TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

In PY 2015, VETS continued to rely on a set of "Common Measures," which allows for a comparison of outcomes across programs, to assess the performance of the AJC system in providing employment and training services to veterans.⁵ VETS has used these three Common Measures to evaluate the efficacy of its grant programs' services to veterans, and to compare them to similar programs administered by ETA, which serves the entire American workforce:

- **Entered Employment Rate**, which is the percentage of participants served who are employed in the first quarter after exit from the program. *This measure answers the question, "How many unemployed people went to work after receiving services?"*
- **Employment Retention Rate**, which is the percentage of program participants who entered employment and who are still employed in the second and third quarters following their exit from the program. *This measure answers the question, "How many of those employed after receiving services remained at work for at least six months after receiving services?"*
- **Average Earnings for six months**, which is calculated based on the average of wages paid to program participants who entered employment and who are still employed in the second and third quarters following the quarter in which they exited the program. *This measure answers the question, "What are the average six month earnings of individuals who are employed for at least six months after receiving services?"*

DOL measures outcomes for all participants in workforce system programs. For its part, VETS measures outcomes for Common Measures in its formula grants and competitive grants programs, all of which are discussed in more detail in the following pages of this report. Note that PY 2015 is the final year using the above-described metrics; the WIOA performance accountability system went into effect on July 1, 2016 (PY 2016), ushering in a new set of standardized performance indicators that replaced the Common Measures. Due to reporting lag, the WIOA metrics reflecting the new primary indicators of performance will be first reported in the FY2017 Annual Report.

⁵ DOL applied these Common Measures in its performance accountability system for programs administered by both ETA and by VETS, from PY 2005 to PY 2015. As noted above, the new performance accountability provisions under WIOA did not take effect until July 1, 2016. WIOA sec. 506(b)(1) (29 U.S.C. 3101 *note*).

Jobs for Veterans State Grants

Through the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program, VETS offers employment and training services at American Job Centers nationwide. This program assists veterans with significant barriers to employment and other eligible individuals, to facilitate their transition to civilian employment.^{6, 7}

VETS provides funds to states to support two types of staff positions: Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, both of which are described in detail below. In PY 2015, VETS required each state to provide both a five-year Veterans' Services Plan and an annual update to the plan to ensure that necessary staffs are employed to carry out the provisions of the program. This plan includes strategies for reaching populations of eligible veterans throughout each state, services to veterans, and cooperative arrangements between states and private industry, educational institutions, trade associations, and labor unions to improve services and outcomes. Under WIOA, State Workforce Development Boards are encouraged to develop a combined plan for all education and workforce programs, which may include the JVSG program. The plans will be in place for four years.

DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM

The primary duty of DVOP specialists is to provide individualized career services to eligible program participants. Individualized career services are designed to mitigate an individual's barriers to employment through comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and needs, the development of an individual employment plan, group and individual career counseling and planning, and short-term instruction to augment skills development (such as interview and communication skills). DVOP specialists may be located at AJCs, or co-located with other service providers, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE

LVER staffs conduct job development activities to facilitate veterans' transition into civilian employment. This includes outreach to, and engagement of, business and community leaders, to identify job prospects for veterans and promote veteran hiring. LVER staff coordinate with DVOP specialists and other AJC staff to seamlessly transition veteran clients into appropriate employment in the local community.

Development and Training for DVOP Specialists and LVER Staff

Quality training is critical to DVOP and LVER success. Newly-appointed DVOP specialists and LVER staff must receive job-related training within 18 months of their appointment. This training is provided by the National Veterans' Training Institute through a competitively-awarded contract with VETS. In FY 2016, 100 percent of staff completed core training, including 466 staff completing the Intensive Services course, 510 staff completing the Facilitating Veterans

⁶ In addition to veterans with significant barriers to employment, the DOL Secretary has identified all veterans ages 18-24 as eligible for services from a DVOP specialist. See Veterans' Program Letter 04-14, *Designation of Additional Population of Veterans Eligible for Services from the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist – Veterans Ages 18 to 24* (Apr. 10, 2014).

⁷ In the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2015, P.L. 113-235, JVSG eligibility was expanded to Transitioning Service Members of the Armed Forces who have participated in the Transition Assistance Program and have been identified as in need of intensive services and members of the Armed forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units, and their spouses or other family caregivers. This expansion of eligibility was also included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, P.L. 114-113, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, P.L. 115-31.

Employment course, and 190 staff completing the Employer Outreach course.

DVOP AND LVER STAFFING LEVELS

VETS awards JVSG grant funds by formula to each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The formula is based on the following factors:

1. The number of unemployed individuals in the general population in each state, compared with the total number of unemployed individuals in the general population across all states; and
2. The number of veterans in the civilian labor force in each state, compared with the total number of veterans in the civilian labor force across all states.

In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act and policy guidance regarding staffing levels, states may determine the ratio of DVOP specialists and LVER staff based upon local economic conditions and a state’s plan for meeting the employment service needs of the program’s target population. Table 1 provides FY 2015 and FY 2016 funding and staffing levels for DVOP specialists and LVER staff.⁸

Table 1. DVOP Specialists and LVER Staff Funding⁹

DVOP Specialists	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change
DVOP Funding	\$115,967,000	\$114,234,592	-\$1,732,408 (-1.5%)
Projected DVOP Staffing	1,484.5	1,445.5	-39 (-2.6%)
Actual DVOP Positions	1,315	1,286	-29 (-2.2%)
Average Cost per Position	\$88,130	\$88,829	\$699 (0.7%)
LVER Staff	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change
LVER Funding	\$56,689,000	\$56,510,920	- \$178,080 (-0.3%)
Projected LVER Staffing	642.5	663.5	21 (3.2%)
Actual LVER Positions	541	529	-12 (-2.2%)
Average Cost per Position	\$104,429	\$106,826	\$2,397 (2.3%)

As Table 1 shows, the number of DVOP specialists and LVER staff has remained relatively steady, with only slight reductions in both programs. States continue to meet the goal of providing individualized career services to JVSG participants, which is the primary responsibility of DVOP specialists.

⁸ As reported in the Veterans’ Employment and Training Operations and Program Activity Report (VOPAR) System, FY 2016 (ending September 30, 2016) Staffing, Spending and Funding Balance Worksheet. (Run Date December 31, 2016).

⁹ The results in this table reflect updated actuals and do not always tie to the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ), which included best estimates at the time it was drafted.

JVSG Services for Participants

In PY 2015, 170,044 participants¹⁰ were referred to JVSG staff that provided services to the specific categories of veterans shown in Table 2. Please note, however, that the categories in Table 2 include overlapping data because a veteran may be counted under more than one category (e.g., a veteran could be categorized as both female and as a recently separated veteran). Veterans are identified under these categories during the initial intake process at AJCs. The overall number of Americans enrolled in workforce programs decreased from over 14 million in PY2014 to just over 13 million in PY 2015.

Table 2. JVSG Participant Statistics

Population or Sub-Population	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change
Veterans and other eligible spouses served (percentage of total)	185,590	170,044	-15,546
Disabled veterans	56,716 (31%)	54,136 (32%)	-2,580 (+1%)
Campaign badge veterans ¹¹	83,404 (45%)	72,684 (43%)	-10,720 (-2%)
Recently separated veterans	37,482 (20%)	29,866 (18%)	-7,616 (-2%)
Female veterans	25,090 (14%)	25,338 (15%)	248 (+1%)
Transitioning service members ¹²	5,001 (3%)	4,711 (3%)	-290 (0%)
Homeless veterans	17,596 (9%)	16,046 (10%)	-1,550 (+1%)

¹⁰ This figure represents the unduplicated participant count of veterans and transitioning service members served by DVOP specialists, as reported in the Labor Exchange Reporting System, VETS-200A: Participant Services and Outcomes of DVOP, and by the ETA form 9133 for the States of Utah, Texas and Pennsylvania. Data as of 6/30/2016.

¹¹ A veteran who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.

¹² This number reflects Transitioning Service Members who received employment services from JVSG staff, not those participating in the Transition Assistance Program's DOL Employment Workshop. Those TAP workshops are now facilitated by contract staff.

Table 3. Comparison of Employment Outcomes of Exiters Served by DVOP Specialists, PY 2014 - PY 2015¹³

Employment Outcome	Veterans/Eligible Persons			Disabled Veterans		
	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change ¹⁴
Number of Veterans Who Entered Employment Following Staff-Assisted Services	87,914	66,827	-21,087	19,303	19,607	+304
Entered Employment Rate	58%	59%	+1%	53%	55%	+2%
Employment Retention Rate	82%	82%	0%	80%	80%	0%

As shown in Table 3, the entered employment rate for veterans and veterans with disabilities continues to improve slightly. The number of veterans exiting the JVSG program continues to decline as a result of guidance released by the Department specifying that only those veterans with significant barriers to employment, or populations defined by the Secretary, may be referred to DVOP specialists. All other veterans are served by the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services or other AJC partner programs, where they receive Priority of Service. Additionally, as the economy continues to improve, the workforce system is providing services to fewer participants nationwide.

Table 4 provides the performance history for each of VETS' Common Measures for all veteran participants and veterans with disabilities.¹⁵

¹³ As reported in the ETA-9132 for the states of Texas, Utah, and Pennsylvania and as reported in Labor Exchange Reporting System VETS-200A for all other states. Data as of 6/30/2016.

¹⁴ Where applicable in this report, percentage point changes will be indicated as "ppts."

¹⁵ As reported in the ETA-9132 for the states of Texas, Utah, and Pennsylvania and as reported in Labor Exchange Reporting System VETS-200D for all other states. Data as of 6/30/2016.

Table 4. Common Measure Results, PY 2014 - 2015, Combined Outcomes of Wagner-Peyser Employment Service and Jobs for Veterans State Grants

Measure	PY 2014 Result	PY 2015 Result	Change
Percentage of veterans employed in the first quarter after exit	58%	60%	+2%
Percentage of veterans employed in the first quarter after exit still employed in the second and third quarters after exit	83%	83%	0%
Average six-month earnings of veterans in the second and third quarters after exit	\$17,425	\$17,803	+\$375
Percentage of <i>disabled</i> veterans employed in the first quarter after exit	52%	55%	+3%
Percentage of <i>disabled</i> veterans employed in the first quarter after exit still employed in the second and third quarters after exit	81%	82%	+1%
Average six-month earnings of <i>disabled</i> veterans in the second and third quarters after exit	\$18,363	\$18,643	+\$280

PY 2015 PERFORMANCE

As shown in Table 4, average six-month earnings, employment entry, and retention rates for veterans and disabled veterans improved or remained constant from the previous year.

WEIGHTED OUTCOMES

JVSG program measures take into account the difficulty of serving veterans with particular barriers to employment by reporting a “weighted” outcome. The weighted outcome measure was implemented following a recommendation from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that DOL, as required under the JVA, 38 U.S.C. 4102A(f), “implement a weighting system for the DVOP and LVER performance measures that takes into account the difficulty of serving veterans with particular barriers to employment.”¹⁶

Under this system, a veteran who receives intensive services through the JVSG program receives a value, or weight, of 1.25, while all other participants receive a weight of 1.0.

The results of the weighted entered employment rate measure indicate that veterans receiving intensive services fared better at entering employment than those who did not receive intensive services. Note that the numbers of participants below are those that have exited the program, as opposed to those who may still be receiving services.

¹⁶ Government Accountability Office Report 07-594: Labor Could Improve Information on Reemployment Services, Outcomes, and Program Impact, May 2007.

Table 5. Weighted Measure Outcomes of Participants Who Exited the Program and Received Services Delivered by a DVOP Specialist

Weighted Veterans Measure	PY 2014	PY 2015	% Change
Number of Veterans Who Received Staff Assisted Services	154,357	132,769	-21,588 (-13.9%)
Number of Veterans Who Entered Employment	87,544	66,827	-20,717 (-23.6%)
Number of Veterans Who Received Intensive Services	113,034	116,948	+3,914 (+3.5%)
Number of Veterans Who Entered Employment after Receiving Intensive Services	48,255	49,700	+1,445 (+3%)
Unweighted Entered Employment Rate	58%	59%	1%
Weighted Entered Employment Rate	66%	70%	4%

IMPLEMENTING A UNIFORM NATIONAL THRESHOLD VETERANS’ ENTERED EMPLOYMENT RATE

The Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA) amended 38 U.S.C. 4102A(c)(3)(B) to require that the Secretary of Labor establish, through regulations, a Uniform National Threshold Entered Employment Rate (UNTEER) for veterans, to evaluate states’ performance in helping veterans meet their employment needs. The final rule, 20 C.F.R. part 1001 (78 Fed. Reg. 15283), was published on March 11, 2013, with an effective date of May 10, 2013.

On March 18, 2015, VETS issued Veterans Program Letter 03-15 (Applying UNTEER to Veteran Entered Employment Rates to Determine Compliance and Identify Need for Remedial Actions). Since the National Entered Employment Rate for Veterans and Eligible Spouses served under the Wagner-Peyser program for the program year that ended June 30, 2016, was 60.1 percent, the UNTEER was calculated at 54.1 percent, or 90 percent of 60.1 percent. As a result, nine states did not meet or exceed the UNTEER. Federal staff will work with these states to determine whether the outcome reflects deficiencies in a state’s performance or is attributable to other factors beyond the state’s control. In cases where a performance deficiency is identified, the final rule requires the state to submit a corrective action plan for review and approval by DOL. It also outlines protocols that VETS field staff will follow to provide technical assistance to the state agency to help it better meet the employment needs of veterans.

The results from VETS refocusing the DVOP position is evident from Table 5 above. As economic conditions continued to improve during FY 2016, participation rates generally declined in most DOL programs. However, despite this drop in participation, the number of veterans who received intensive services increased from last fiscal year. The intensive service delivery rate was slightly under 89 percent for DVOP specialists in FY 2016.

INCENTIVE AWARD ANALYSIS

Under 38 U.S.C. 4102A and 4112, as amended by the JVA, VETS provides funds for performance incentive awards, to be administered by states, to recognize quality employment, training, and placement services. In particular, one percent of a state’s total JVSG Program Year grant allocation is reserved to be used for the following:

- Encouraging the improvement and modernization of employment, training, and placement services for veterans; and

- Recognizing eligible employees and employment service offices for excellence in the provision of such services, or for having made demonstrable improvements in the provision of services to veterans.

Typically, states use these incentive funds to provide cash awards to individual recipients. However, a state may provide nonfinancial incentives in lieu of, or in combination with, cash awards, as outlined in its VETS-approved state Veterans' Services Plan.¹⁷ Further, states have the option to decline the allocation of incentive award funds. In FY 2016, 20 state agencies declined receipt of incentive award funds due to legislative restrictions, state policies, union agreements, or for other unspecified reasons; this amount is consistent with previous years. These funds are used to consider special initiatives proposed by states, including temporary increases to DVOP and LVER staffing.

In FY 2016, the accumulated, total set-aside by VETS for the incentive funds was \$1,731,500. Of this available amount, \$1,104,933 was utilized by 34 state agencies (including agencies in the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands) for staff and office incentive awards.

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), authorized under 38 U.S.C. 2021, provides employment and training services to help homeless veterans transition into meaningful employment and to develop effective methods to address the complex problems resulting in homelessness.

HVRP funds are awarded to eligible entities through a competitive grant process outlined in an annual Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). Eligible entities in PY 2015 included state and local Workforce Investment Boards; public agencies; Native American governments and Native American tribal organizations; nonprofit organizations; and for-profit commercial entities. Grantees provide an array of services to veterans experiencing homelessness through a holistic case management approach, which includes critical linkages to a variety of support services available in local communities. Successful grant applicants must specifically describe how their outreach to homeless veterans will build an effective level of collaboration with other entities, such as Grant and Per Diem (GPD) grantees, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Veterans' Affairs Supportive Housing program (HUDVASH), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grantees.

Each HVRP participant receives customized employment and training services to address his or her specific barriers to employment. Services may include occupational, classroom, and on-the-job training, as well as job search, placement assistance, and post-placement follow-up services.

DVOP specialists and LVER staff also support HVRP grantees by providing critical resources to help grantees achieve job placement and retention goals through case management, direct employer contact, job development, and follow-up services.

¹⁷ State Veterans' Services Plans are developed by states to describe the methods that will be used to provide specific services to veterans using prescribed funding levels.

In FY 2016, Congress appropriated \$38.1 million to DOL for HVRP. Funds were awarded to 153 grantees. Specifically, 64 newly-competed grants were awarded, and 89 grantees were approved to receive option-year funding. These include awards to targeted programs designed to address the employment barriers of specific veteran populations, as follows:

- Twelve HVRP Homeless Female Veterans and Veterans with Families (HFVVWF) grantees were awarded a third and final option year.
- Additionally, in FY 2016 VETS issued Veterans’ Program Letter 03-16 mandating that all homeless veterans program participants must be enrolled in the public workforce system at an American Job Center. This guidance will improve the array of services to formerly homeless veterans by providing an opportunity to receive AJC services such as, but not limited to, JVSG services, WIOA-funded services, state vocational rehabilitation services, and Wagner-Peyser employment services.

Table 6 provides performance information from the HVRP program for the previous two program years. HVRP enrollment data has remained essentially unchanged from PY 2014. Cost per participant increased by less than \$100, and average hourly wage at placement increased from \$11.85 to \$12.19 per hour.

Table 6. HVRP Participant Statistics, PY 2014 and PY 2015¹⁸

	Participants Enrolled			Average Cost per Participant			Average Cost per Placement			Average Hourly Wage at Placement		
	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change	PY 2014	PY 2015	Change
Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program	17,033	16,638	-395	\$2,009	\$2,081	+\$72	\$2,925	\$3,036	+\$111	\$11.85	\$12.19	+\$0.34
HVRP Subset: Homeless Female Veterans and Veterans with Families	1,211	701	-510	\$2,541	\$2,924	+\$383	\$3,971	\$4,092	+\$121	\$13.84	\$15.41	+\$1.57
HVRP Subset: Incarcerated Veterans’ Transition Program	N/A	414	NA	N/A	\$3,444	NA	N/A	\$6,542	NA	N/A	\$11.34	NA

¹⁸ The results in this table reflect updated actuals and do not always tie to the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ), which included best estimates at the time it was drafted.

HOMELESS VETERANS' STAND DOWN GRANTS

In FY 2016, VETS utilized a portion of HVRP funds to support “Stand Down” events.¹⁹ These events, held in local communities, provide a variety of social services to homeless veterans. Stand Down events serve as gateways into structured housing and reintegration programs. In particular, Stand Down organizers partner with local business and social service providers to offer the following critical services:

- shower facilities/haircuts;
- meals;
- legal advice;
- medical examinations and dental treatment;
- hygiene care kits;
- immunizations;
- information on veterans’ benefits;
- information on training and employment opportunities;
- information on support services, including child care; and
- emotional support and camaraderie among other veterans.

VETS awarded \$490,181.72 for 64 Stand Down events in FY 2016 which provided direct services to homeless veterans.

¹⁹ The maximum amount awarded to HVRP eligible entities to support a Stand Down event is \$7,000 for a one-day event and \$10,000 for a multi-day event.

The Transition Assistance Program – DOL Employment Workshop

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for separating and retiring service members and their spouses, provided under 10 U.S.C. 1144, is a cooperative effort among VETS, the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Education (ED), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), VA, the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management. VETS administers the DOL Employment Workshop as a component of TAP, both domestically and at overseas installations, providing job preparation and employment services to assist transitioning service members in entering the civilian workforce. DOL provides Employment Workshops based on the demands of the Armed Services.

The DOL Employment Workshop is standardized so that all attending service members and their spouses receive the same high level of instruction. The course consists of three days of classroom instruction that is tightly focused on four core competencies:

- Developing and executing a job search plan;
- Planning for success in a civilian work environment;
- Creating resumes, cover letters, and other self-marketing materials; and
- Engaging in successful interviews and networking conversations.

In FY 2016, the interagency partners collected and analyzed survey results regarding participants' satisfaction with the TAP curriculum and delivery methods. Participant survey results noted that 96 percent reported that they would use what they learned in their own transition planning and 94 percent reported that the DOL Employment Workshop enhanced their confidence in transition planning. The data suggest that the DOL Employment Workshop is meeting the expectations of its audience.

In FY 2016, VETS completed the implementation of the revised DOL Employment Workshop curriculum begun in FY 2015. This revision incorporated extensive input from TAP stakeholders, including military transition services personnel, transitioning service members, private sector employers, and Veterans Service Organizations. The result was an employment workshop focused on the four competencies noted above. Additionally, in FY 2016, VETS conducted a technical review of the curriculum in accordance with the Transition Assistance Curriculum Working Group's two-year review cycle. The purpose of the technical review was to ensure that the content, data, and web sites used in the curriculum was accurate and up to date.

DOMESTIC WORKSHOP PERFORMANCE

As can be seen in Table 7, DOL Employment Workshop activity remained consistent with FY 2015 with a small increase in participants between FY 2015 and FY 2016, based on DoD demand.

Table 7. Domestic DOL Employment Workshops and Participants, FY 2015 - 2016

Category	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change
Workshops	5,806	5,685	-2%
Participants	167,369	169,464	+1%

OVERSEAS DOL EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP PERFORMANCE

VETS currently delivers DOL Employment Workshops at sites in Bahrain, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Guam, Italy, Korea, Japan, Okinawa (Japan), Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, Cuba, Romania, and Qatar.

Table 8 shows the number of participants in the DOL Employment Workshop overseas increased between FY 2015 and FY 2016, based on DoD demand.

Table 8. Overseas TAP Workshops and Participants, FY 2015 - 2016

Category	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change
Workshops	644	628	-2%
Participants	13,424	14,576	+9%

Following significant increases in participation in FY 2013 and FY 2014 due to the enactment of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2012 (which made TAP participation mandatory for most separating and retiring active duty service members), the drawdown of military operations abroad, and reductions-in-force across the service branches, there was a marked decrease in participation in FY 2015. As expected, FY 2016 participation was similar to FY 2015, with a small increase in attendance. Based on projections from the military services, VETS expects this trend to continue for the foreseeable future.

In FY 2016, VETS conducted regularly scheduled Wounded Warrior DOL Employment Workshops at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and Fort Riley, Kansas. (VETS is prepared to expand delivery of the modified workshops to additional installations in FY 2017, upon request.)

Additionally in FY 2016, VETS began the data transfer process from the Defense Manpower Data Center for the Veteran Data Exchange Initiative (VDEI). The overall intent of this initiative is to gain a better understanding about the transitioning service members which in turn will allow VETS to better prepare to serve these individuals. Data elements on transitioning service members such as race, gender, military occupation specialty, and others are now available for the roughly 200,000 transitioning service members each year. Partnering with DOL's Chief Evaluation Office, VETS is examining the VDEI data to determine how the data can be used to analyze employment outcomes for transitioning service members and improve service delivery.

Compliance and Investigations

VETS is responsible for administering three Federal compliance programs that provide employment protections for veterans.

THE UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT OF 1994

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) aims to encourage non-career service in the uniformed services by eliminating or minimizing disadvantages to civilian careers and employment, which can result from such service; minimize the disruption to the lives of persons performing service in the uniformed services, as well as to their employers, their fellow employees, and their communities, by providing for the prompt reemployment of such persons upon their completion of such service; and prohibit discrimination against persons because of their service in the uniformed services.

In FY 2016, VETS opened 930 USERRA cases. Further details of VETS' USERRA enforcement activities are provided in the Department's USERRA Annual Report to Congress, found here: (<https://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/index.htm>)

VETS provides an online USERRA Advisor (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>), which assists veterans in understanding employee eligibility and job entitlements, employer obligations, benefits, and remedies under USERRA. This Advisor also assists employees in determining whether they appear to have valid complaints and provides the ability to electronically file USERRA complaints.

There are three levels of Federal assistance available to individuals who believe their USERRA rights may have been violated:

1. Informal Mediation - The individual may request that DoD's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Ombudsman services help resolve the issue through informal mediation.
2. Formal Complaint for Formal Investigation and Resolution - The individual may file a formal complaint with VETS regardless of whether the individual first contacted DoD for mediation. VETS subsequently conducts a formal investigation and attempts to resolve the complaint.
3. Referral to Department of Justice (DOJ) or U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) - If VETS is unable to resolve the complaint or the claimant disagrees with its outcome, the claimant may request that the case be referred to either DOJ (for employees of private, state, and local government employers) or OSC (for Federal government employees) for further review and possible representation by DOJ in Federal district court or by OSC before the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). Claimants may also withdraw their complaint at any time to pursue enforcement at their own expense, either pro se or with the assistance of counsel.

VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT

Under 5 U.S.C. 3304(f), as added by the Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA), preference-eligibles or veterans who have been separated from the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after three years or more of active military service, are allowed to apply for certain Federal merit promotion opportunities for which an agency accepts applications from individuals outside its own workforce. Under 5 U.S.C. 3330a(a)(1)(A), VEOA also provides that preference-eligibles who allege their rights are violated under any statute or regulation relating to veterans' preference may file a claim with VETS.

VETS plays an important role in VEOA administration. In particular, VETS field staff investigates complaints received from preference-eligibles who allege that their rights have been violated by a Federal agency during either the hiring process or a reduction-in-force.

Upon reaching a meritorious determination, VETS notifies the agency of the determination and advises actions to be taken to comply with the VEOA. If the agency complies, the case is closed as either settled or granted, based on agreement between the parties. The resolution depends on the violation that occurred and may include payment of back wages and benefits.

If the agency fails to comply, VETS closes the case and advises the claimant of VETS' inability to resolve the issue. In those circumstances, the claimant is notified of his or her right to appeal the case to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) against the agency determined to have violated his or her VEOA rights. Finally, if the MSPB issues a decision adverse to the claimant, the claimant may further appeal to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

If VETS determines that a VEOA violation has taken place, or there is evidence of a violation, a copy of the complete case file, including the complaint and supporting documentation, is forwarded to the OSC, after the case is closed, as a potential prohibited personnel practice (PPP) case for review under a Memorandum of Understanding between OSC and VETS. OSC's role is to ascertain whether a PPP has taken place pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(11), which provides that a Federal employee who has authority over personnel decisions may not:

- (A) knowingly take, recommend, or approve any personnel action if the taking of such action would violate a veterans' preference requirement; or
- (B) knowingly fail to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action if the failure to take such action would violate a veterans' preference requirement.

OSC's review thus occurs after VETS' investigation and attempt to settle a case. Further, OSC's review has no impact on the claimant's right to appeal to the MSPB or to the Federal Circuit Court. Instead, OSC reviews cases to determine if PPPs took place that warrant disciplinary action against the agency or its responsible personnel.

VETS maintains a Veterans' Preference Advisor that provides information and advice in an electronic format to employers and employees regarding veterans' preference issues. In particular, the Advisor helps veterans determine the types of preferences and benefits to which they are entitled, explains the process for filing a complaint, and provides an electronic claim form. The Advisor can be found on the Department's "elaws" website at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vetspref.htm>. VETS also provides its investigators with a "Veterans' Preference Operations Manual," which, among other things, provides uniform guidance for processing complaints brought by preference-eligible veterans who allege a denial of their rights under the provisions of the VEOA.

Tables 9 and 10 display the total number of Veterans' Preference cases investigated during FY 2016 and case outcomes. Of the 474 complaints received in FY 2016, and the 50 cases carried over from FY 2015, VETS closed 489 cases. On average, cases were resolved in 33 days.

Of the 489 Veterans' Preference cases closed in FY 2016, 18 (3.7 percent) were found to have merit. Investigations were completed in 377 (77.1 percent) of the 489 cases. The remaining 112 cases were closed administratively, withdrawn by the claimant, or the claimant elected to proceed to the MSPB before the investigation concluded within the time frame allowed by statute.²⁰

²⁰ In these cases, the claimant may request that VETS cease investigative action after 60 days and appeal to MSPB directly on the 61st day after VETS' receipt of the claim.

Table 9. FY 2016 Veterans' Preference Cases²¹

Category or Subcategory	Number or Percentage of Cases
Total Cases	524
Cases Carried Forward from FY 2015	50
Cases Opened During FY 2016	474
FY 2016 Opened Cases - Issue Hiring	468
FY 2016 Opened Cases - Issue Reduction in Force	6
Total Cases Closed During FY 2016	489
Percent of FY 2016 Cases Closed within 60 days	89.8%
Percent of FY 2016 Cases Closed within 90 days	95.3%
Average Number of Days Case Was Open	33

Table 10. FY 2016 Veterans' Preference Case Outcomes

Category or Subcategory	Number of Cases
Total Cases Closed	489
Cases Closed Due to "Merit Finding"	18
<i>Hiring</i>	18
<i>Reduction in Force</i>	0
Cases Closed Due to "No Merit Finding"	287
<i>Hiring</i>	285
<i>Reduction in Force</i>	2
Cases Closed Due to "Not Eligible"	26
Cases Closed Due to "Untimely Filed"	46
Cases Closed Due to "Merit Determination Not Made"	112
<i>Administratively Closed</i>	29
<i>Claim Withdrawn</i>	45
<i>Merit Undetermined</i>	23
<i>Duplicate</i>	15
Total Cases Converted to USERRA Claims	0
Total Cases Still Pending	35

²¹ As reported in the Veterans' Preference Information Management System

VIETNAM ERA VETERANS' READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1974

VETS-4212 Report

The reporting requirement of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA), as amended, 38 U.S.C. 4212(d), requires that contractors and subcontractors awarded qualifying Federal contracts annually report on the total number of their employees who belong to certain categories of veterans, and the number of those employees who were newly hired during the reporting period.

The reporting obligation applies to those entities with a Federal government contract of \$150,000 or more entered into or modified after December 1, 2003.²² Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4212(a) and (d), as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act, contractors submitting these reports provide data on protected veterans in their employ that fall under one or more of the following categories:

- Disabled veterans;
- Veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. military during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized;
- Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces service medal was awarded pursuant to Executive Order 12985; and
- Recently separated veterans (within three years of discharge or release from active duty).

The VETS-4212 reports must be filed each year by September 30. Table 11 provides a summary of the reports filed during FY 2016.

²² As explained previously, while 38 U.S.C. 4212 refers to a \$100,000 contract threshold, effective October 1, 2015, the contract threshold increased to \$150,000 per an inflationary adjustment statute implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation Council. See Federal Acquisition Regulation; Inflation Adjustment of Acquisition-Related Thresholds, 80 *Federal Register* 38293, 38298 (July 2, 2015).

Table 11. Annual Federal Contractor Reporting as of September 2016²³

Category	2015 VETS-4212	2016 VETS-4212	Change
Total Federal Contractors Filing	16,754	17,193	441
Total Submitted Reports	250,344	308,892	58,548
Single Establishment	8,308	8,249	-59
Multiple Establishment – Headquarters	7,126	7,715	589
Multiple Establishment – Hiring Location	229,409	285,694	56,285
Multiple Establishment – State Consolidated	5,501	7,234	1,733
All Protected Veterans Employed	850,372	1,070,434	220,062
Total All Employees	21,053,413	25,136,591	4,083,184
All Protected Veterans Newly Hired	194,926	311,900	116,974
Total All New Hires	4,789,454	6,386,939	1,597,485

The strong increase in total employees/new hires is consistent with previous years and also aligns with the improving economy overall during the past few years. This is also good news for veterans as further proof of increased hiring nationwide.

Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements

DOL’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is responsible for enforcing the nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity requirements of VEVRAA. OFCCP’s implementing regulations are at 41 CFR Part 60-300. VEVRAA prohibits Federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against protected veterans, and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain these veterans. Covered contractors and subcontractors are required to engage in outreach to veterans and establish an annual hiring benchmark against which they measure their progress. Violations of VEVRAA are identified through complaint investigations and compliance evaluations of covered Federal contractors and subcontractors. OFCCP processed 53 complaints filed under VEVRAA in FY 2016.

²³ Federal contractors are required to submit reports for all of their hiring locations; hence the number of total reports exceeds the number of total contractors that file. In addition, Federal contractors with hiring locations employing fewer than 50 persons can file a “multiple establishment consolidated report”; hence the number of total multiple establishment consolidated in the total multiple establishment hiring location reports.

Interagency Collaboration

THE WOMEN'S BUREAU

The Women's Bureau and VETS collaborate on a variety of projects related to women veterans. The agencies work together to empower women veterans to successfully compete for jobs in the civilian labor force, and to educate employers on the value of adding women veterans to their workforce.

THE OFFICE OF FEDERAL CONTRACT COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) collaborates with VETS to support outreach to employers that are federal contractors seeking to recruit and hire veterans.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

As mentioned in Section I (The Workforce System), VETS collaborates with DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) which administers the public workforce system and key workforce programs that also serve veterans and military spouses. VETS works closely with various ETA programs to ensure priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided, that guidance to grantees has a veteran focus in mind, and that statistics and analytics for veteran outcomes are able to be achieved.

WIOA (formerly WIA) Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker Programs

The WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs, authorized under Title I of WIOA, are designed to provide quality employment and job training services to assist eligible individuals to find and obtain meaningful employment and to help employers find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in the 21st-century economy. In FY 2014, Congress passed and the President signed WIOA into law, which reauthorized the Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs previously authorized under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Most of the provisions in WIOA went into effect on July 1, 2015, though some of its provisions have other effective dates. The performance accountability provisions went into effect on July 1, 2016. With the new reporting requirements, states will submit their first WIOA performance reports in October 2017. Full WIOA performance outcome information will not be available until October 2019.

Trade Adjustment Assistance

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) or the Trade Act Program helps trade-affected workers who have lost or may lose their jobs as a result of foreign trade. Individuals in worker groups certified by the Secretary of Labor as being trade-affected may be eligible for services, training, income support, and other allowances to assist them in obtaining new jobs and the skills, credentials, resources, and support they may need to become reemployed. In FY 2016, over 3,700 veterans received assistance through TAA.

National Dislocated Worker Grants Program (formerly known as National Emergency Grants)

Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) provide resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses. This funding is intended to temporarily expand capacity to serve dislocated workers, including military service members, and meet the increased demand for WIOA employment and training services. The purpose of DWGs is to reemploy laid-off workers and enhance their employability and earnings. Effective July 2015, WIOA makes DWG resources available to areas experiencing higher than average

demand for employment and training activities for dislocated service members and spouses.

Indian and Native American Program

This program provides unemployed and under-skilled Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian adults with intensive training and support services. With this assistance, members of these indigenous communities are better equipped to find and take advantage of a broad array of employment opportunities. WIOA reauthorized the Indian and Native American Program.

Registered Apprenticeship

The Registered Apprenticeship system is a unique, flexible training system that combines job-related technical instruction with structured on-the-job learning experiences. The Registered Apprenticeship system provides opportunities for workers seeking in-demand jobs and for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce. In PY 2015, the percentage of veterans participating in Registered Apprenticeships continued to increase (to 10.3 percent) and exceeded the veteran participation rate in the labor force (6.8 percent).

Veterans' Participation Rates for PY 2015

In calendar year 2016, veterans made up 6.8 percent of the civilian labor force, ages 18 and over.²⁴ As displayed in Table 12, data for PY 2015 indicate that ETA's adult employment and training programs served over 900,000 veterans among over 13 million participants, which results in a participation rate for veterans of 6.5 percent, a decrease of 0.4 percent from PY 2014. Some of this drop may be accounted for by both the improving economy and the relative success veterans are having in navigating the labor market compared to nonveterans. The veteran unemployment rate in calendar year 2016 was 4.3 percent for veterans compared to 4.7 percent for nonveterans.²⁵

Among ETA programs, the highest veterans' participation rates were recorded by the Senior Community Service Employment program (12.9 percent) and the National Emergency Grant program (10.9 percent). As mentioned previously, Registered Apprenticeship and the TAA program also exceeded the veteran participation rate in the civilian labor force. These, as well as the WIA Adult (7.0 percent) and WIA Dislocated Worker (7.3 percent) programs, had participation rates at or above the veteran participation rate in the labor force. The rates of participation in WIA Dislocated Worker and TAA are encouraging because those programs offer a wider range of services, such as in-depth assessments, classroom training, and employer-specific on-the-job training. As a result, through these programs, veterans are better prepared to enter the civilian workforce. The high rate of veterans entering into Registered Apprenticeship programs is encouraging because these programs provide a pathway into well-paying careers.

The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service veteran participation rate was 6.5 percent (slightly below the labor force rate). It is important to note that the Employment Service is a "universal access" program; there are no eligibility requirements, so anyone may receive services. Additionally, it is possible that veteran participation may be higher as recorded veteran status in that program relies on individuals self-identifying as veterans.

²⁴ Based on BLS Current Population Survey (Not Seasonally Adjusted).

²⁵ 2016 statistics on veterans and nonveterans are available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat48.pdf>.

Table 12. PY 2015 Participation in DOL/ETA Programs

PY 2015 DOL/ETA ADULT PROGRAMS	Number of Veterans Participating or Completing Services²⁶	Total Number of Individuals	Veterans' Participation Rate in DOL Programs
Wagner-Peyser Employment Service	858,196	13,245,280	6.48%
WIA Adults	78,296	1,112,153	7.04%
WIA Dislocated Workers	38,994	531,524	7.34%
WIA Youth	47	156,520	<0.05%
Dislocated Worker Grants	3,026	30,056	10.85%
Senior Community Services Employment Program – Ages 55+ (Veterans and Eligible Spouses)	8,430	65,170	12.94%
Indian and Native American Program	123	6,826	1.8%
National Farmworker Jobs Program	95	11,172	0.85%
Total²⁷	987,207	15,158,701	6.5%

Sources: Program data were derived from ETA reporting systems, which track participation levels and services offered to participants. These various systems include: WIASRD (which excludes self-service exiters); Labor Exchange Reporting System; SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly; Trade Act Performance Report; and BearTracks. These programs operate on a Program Year basis, with the exception of the Trade Act program, which operates on a Fiscal Year basis. Individuals were counted only once per Program Year per program. The data for PY 2015 programs are for the period of July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016.

²⁶ The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers Programs, the Indian and Native American Program, the National Emergency Grants, and the National Farmworker Jobs Program track exiters.

²⁷ Some programs and states co-enroll participants to ensure integrated service delivery to job seekers. Accordingly, the total listed in this table represents the sum of participants in all of the programs. Due to the high levels of co-enrollment, the total numbers served in Wagner-Peyser is a recommended indication of the total individuals served in the workforce system.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT (VR&E) ASSISTANCE

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. This is a partnership between VETS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) VR&E, and AJC staff that capitalizes on the strengths of the involved agencies and fosters the ideals of exemplary customer service. Following VR&E's determination that a veteran or service member is entitled to Chapter 31 benefits, local VR&E, VETS and AJC staff coordinate efforts to provide labor market information (LMI) in the geographical area of interest and employment services toward the end of their VR&E plan to assist the veteran in securing suitable employment. All partners focus their efforts and collaborate with regard to assisting the veteran in finding and maintaining employment that can be considered suitable employment by the VA. In FY 2016, VETS continued to strengthen its partnership with the VA by releasing a revised Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) that included specific guidance to refer 100% of veterans in the program for LMI and ES with limited exceptions, to be implemented in October 2016 (FY 2017). This newly established 100% referral criterion will be implemented, tracked using a modernized spreadsheet tool, and reported in the FY 2017 VETS Annual Report. On-line training modules were developed which included a video by directors from each agency describing the modernization program, presenting the new TAG and the framework outlining the specifications in updated local Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the state agency, VA Offices, and VETS staff located in each of the states using the National memorandum of agreement as a model.

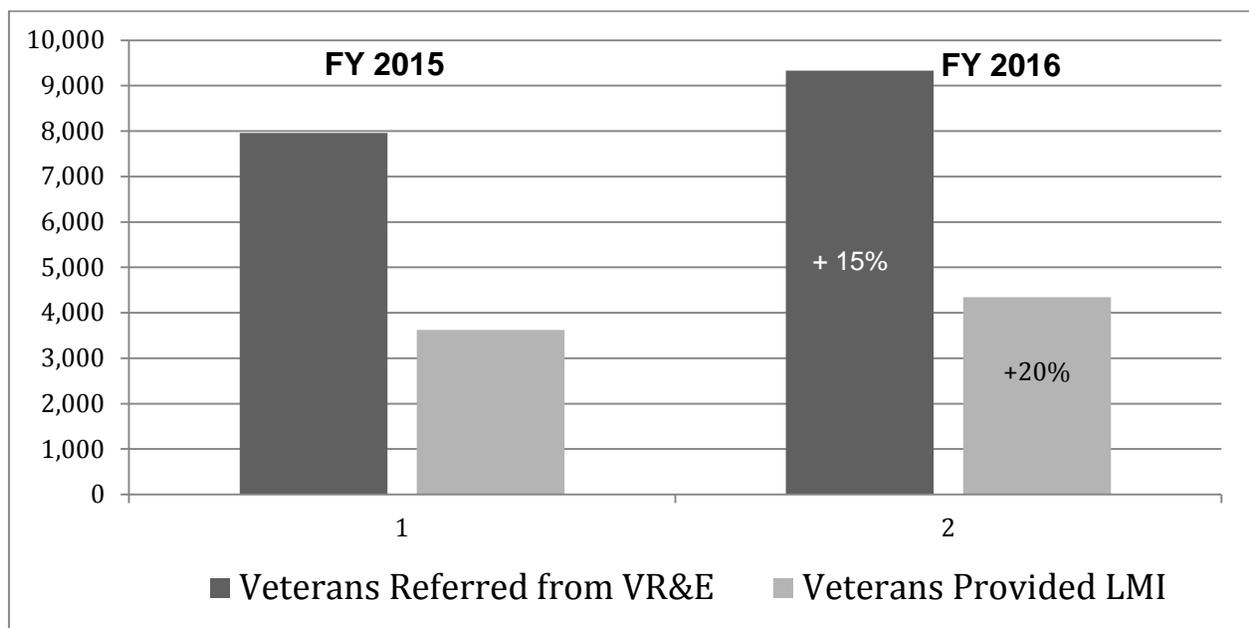
VR&E Participants and Outcomes

During FY 2016, summary data indicates an increase of an average of more than 20 percent in VR&E activity. The reported data indicates that the VA referred 9,333 veterans for DOL-funded services; a 17 percent increase over those referred during FY 2015. Of those referred, 4,346 (46.6 percent) were referred for assistance with LMI for the VR&E to use in developing the veteran's Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). The remaining 4,987 (53.4 percent) were job-ready veterans seeking employment. In FY 2016, 480 (9.6 percent) of the job-ready veterans' participation was either interrupted for extended illness or participants reenrolled into school for additional training. An additional 2,131 (42.7 percent) job-ready veterans were listed as having exited from the program, either because they entered employment or they discontinued their participation for other reasons. Of those veterans who exited, 424 (8.5 percent) entered other than suitable employment, down considerably from FY 2015 statistics, indicating that the focus on providing employment assistance that leads to employment that can be considered suitable according to the VA definition, is being effectively implemented. VETS fully expects that program modernization tools and increased referral of veterans for LMI and ES to American Job Centers for assistance will continue to improve these joint positive outcomes. The average hourly wage of the veterans who entered employment was \$19.48. The table below provides data for VA/DOL VR&E Joint Activities and Outcomes.

Table 13.* FY 2015 and 2016 VR&E Outcomes (number of participants or wages)²⁸

Category	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change
Veterans Referred from VR&E (see chart below)	7,958	9,333	1,375
Carried In from previous year's participation	2,728	2,639	-89
Provided LMI by AJC Staff (see chart below)	3,622	4,346	724
Closed Cases (other than LMI or employment):			
Interrupted	210	231	21
Discontinued	814	997	183
School (furthering education)	173	249	76
Closed, Other	534	710	176
Referred Veterans Available for Work	4,197	4,114	-83
Entered Other Than Suitable Employment	1,561	424	-1,137
Average Entry Hourly Wage	\$18.90	\$19.48	+\$0.58
Rehabilitated	1,076	1,444	368

*Note: Subsequent annual reports will reflect the updated data collection and reporting elements implemented in FY 2017, which support the 100% referral criteria.



Online and Electronic Tools

Online Advisors (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/>) – In FY 2016, VETS continued to support established elaws Advisors on the Department's elaws website. These Advisors mimic the interaction a person might have with an employment law expert and provide assistance with filing complaints under each of these laws. Two of these Advisors were mentioned earlier in this report:

²⁸ As reported in the VETS 201 Annual National Roll-up Report.

- USERRA Advisor (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>)
- Veterans' Preference Advisor (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vetspref.htm>)

VETS maintains two additional elaws Advisors:

- **Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor** (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/realifelines.htm>) – This Advisor provides valuable information and access to contact information for one-on-one employment assistance and online resources to assist transitioning service members and veterans in their reintegration into the civilian workforce.
- **e-VETS Resource Advisor** (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/evets.htm>) – This Advisor assists veterans, transitioning service members, and all those who support them to quickly and easily navigate information and resources on a range of topics, including benefits and compensation; education and training; employment; family and caregiver support; health; homeless assistance; transportation and travel; and state-specific information and resources. This Advisor integrates with the National Resource Directory, a web-based directory of more than 11,000 national, state, and local services for veterans, service members, and their families and caregivers.

In addition to the above mentioned tools maintained by VETS, ETA also sponsors two electronic tools focused on assisting transitioning service members into the civilian workforce:

The Veteran and Military Transition Center (VMTC)

(<https://www.careeronestop.org/Veterans/default.aspx>) and **My Next Move for Veterans** (<https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>) are two collections of easy-to-use online tools for transitioning service members, allowing them to search for continuing education providers, employment resources, and veteran benefit & assistance programs. The tools also allow transitioning service members and veterans to search for employment by military occupation specialty, and provide access to the online employment toolkit.

Legislative Proposals

Below are DOL's legislative recommendations concerning its responsibilities in regard to veterans' employment and training. The proposals are divided into major topic areas. The proposals include recommended changes to better assist veterans through various VETS programs, as well as streamlining and ensuring accurate reporting from VETS internal program areas.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY PROPOSALS

Since 2014, appropriations language has expanded participant eligibility for JVSG services to include transitioning members of the Armed Forces who are determined to be in need of intensive services; members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units; and the spouses and other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members. DOL recommends that this expanded eligibility be formally incorporated into the authorizing statute for the JVSG program, 38 U.S.C. chapters 41 and 42. The appropriations language also requires that for transitioning service members to be eligible for JVSG services, they must have participated in the Transition Assistance Program and have been identified as in need of intensive services. DOL recommends against the inclusion of this restriction, as some service members who would benefit from these services may not have been so identified in TAP or may need the service prior to TAP participation. Instead, DOL recommends that the Assistant Secretary for VETS, in consultation with DoD, be granted authority to determine which transitioning service members are at risk and require intensive services through the JVSG program.

Additionally, DOL recommends extending program eligibility and priority of service to spouses of service members killed in the line of duty by revising the definition of "covered person" at 38 U.S.C. 4215(a)(1)(B) to include such spouses. Certain spouses of veterans are already eligible, including spouses of veterans who have or who died of service-connected disabilities and the spouses of service members who are missing in action, captured, or forcibly detained, but the definition of "covered person" does not currently extend to the spouses of service members killed while on active duty.

DOL also recommends a technical amendment to the definition of homeless veteran at 38 U.S.C. 2002(a)(1) so as to include persons who are considered "recently housed", defined as an individual who now has stable living conditions, but was considered to meet the definition of "homeless veteran" within the previous 30 days of requesting services. Studies have shown that barriers to employment still exist after immediate housing needs are met, and individuals still run a risk of becoming homeless again.

VETS' FEDERAL FIELD STAFF

DOL recommends amending 38 U.S.C. 4103 to eliminate the requirement for clerical federal staff to be located in each state. The proposed change would require the appointment of only one Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET) per state but would permit the assignment of Federal clerical and other support personnel as necessary. Further, DOL recommends eliminating the residency requirement for the DVET position. Currently, Regional Offices must either select a candidate that resides in the state or seek a waiver from the VETS Assistant Secretary.

CHANGE IN ANNUAL REPORT DUE DATE

DOL recommends changing the date of the Annual Report to Congress from February 1 to July 1. The annual fiscal year data is not available until approximately 60 days after the end of the fiscal year (November 30). The report can only be produced once relevant annual and program year data is collected and analyzed for several workload tables and appendices. In the previous two fiscal years, the Annual Reports to Congress were published in May and July. Therefore, this change would better reflect the time needed to publish the report.

Appendix 1 - Employment Outcomes of Veterans and Eligible Spouses Served by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists

State	Entered Employment Rate Weighted Target	Entered Employment Rate Weighted Outcome	Retention Rate Target	Retention Rate Outcome	Six-Months Average Earnings Target	Six-Months Average Earnings Outcome
Alabama	64%	64%	80%	81%	\$15,000	\$16,040
Alaska	65%	65%	77%	76%	\$19,000	\$20,245
Arizona	53%	77%	79%	83%	\$16,662	\$15,486
Arkansas	66%	74%	84%	83%	\$14,200	\$14,146
California	60%	70%	78%	79%	\$18,500	\$17,884
Colorado	53%	78%	71%	79%	\$14,200	\$18,812
Connecticut	51%	66%	78%	80%	\$16,750	\$16,935
Delaware	58%	84%	80%	81%	\$14,700	\$17,418
District of Columbia	61%	60%	79%	82%	\$20,000	\$22,865
Florida	55%	65%	80%	83%	\$14,250	\$15,364
Georgia	54%	64%	75%	78%	\$14,900	\$12,792
Hawaii	47%	52%	79%	75%	\$16,000	\$15,446
Idaho	64%	81%	75%	85%	\$15,000	\$14,824
Illinois	53%	59%	79%	83%	\$16,650	\$18,106
Indiana	65%	75%	79%	81%	\$14,350	\$14,925
Iowa	67%	74%	81%	84%	\$14,250	\$16,044
Kansas	78%	84%	86%	81%	\$13,750	\$14,164
Kentucky	56%	62%	81%	77%	\$16,600	\$14,678
Louisiana	66%	62%	81%	77%	\$17,000	\$15,771
Maine	60%	78%	78%	84%	\$12,750	\$16,800
Maryland	60%	68%	83%	81%	\$19,400	\$18,565
Massachusetts	60%	67%	79%	80%	\$19,000	\$18,638
Michigan	62%	67%	83%	83%	\$14,750	\$14,762
Minnesota	83%	84%	84%	86%	\$15,500	\$18,154
Mississippi	55%	78%	80%	84%	\$12,750	\$12,457
Missouri	50%	68%	77%	77%	\$13,528	\$12,837
Montana	65%	70%	84%	81%	\$18,100	\$18,064
Nebraska	73%	75%	81%	81%	\$14,000	\$14,919
Nevada	52%	72%	78%	80%	\$14,500	\$16,116
New Hampshire	66%	74%	83%	79%	\$15,900	\$13,162
New Jersey	50%	61%	77%	77%	\$16,700	\$16,450
New Mexico	51%	61%	75%	75%	\$15,000	\$15,667
New York	50%	65%	78%	81%	\$15,900	\$17,516
North Carolina	55%	68%	75%	82%	\$13,500	\$14,497
North Dakota	76%	85%	81%	84%	\$18,000	\$20,291
Ohio	74%	82%	81%	79%	\$17,500	\$17,710
Oklahoma	75%	74%	83%	83%	\$14,650	\$14,745
Oregon	54%	62%	80%	81%	\$15,500	\$15,601
Pennsylvania	59%	73%	79%	79%	\$15,250	\$15,353
Puerto Rico	28%	39%	60%	60%	\$9,500	\$11,246
Rhode Island	56%	74%	85%	83%	\$15,126	\$16,380
South Carolina	60%	74%	82%	83%	\$14,500	\$14,610
South Dakota	65%	71%	83%	79%	\$13,750	\$13,446
Tennessee	60%	72%	81%	85%	\$14,606	\$17,112
Texas	66%	75%	83%	83%	\$17,800	\$18,337
Utah	58%	72%	81%	81%	\$17,500	\$19,021
Vermont	72%	73%	83%	76%	\$16,100	\$13,701
Virgin Islands	35%	30%	70%	47%	\$17,000	\$13,640
Virginia	68%	71%	84%	86%	\$17,000	\$18,983
Washington	58%	62%	78%	79%	\$16,700	\$17,200
West Virginia	58%	70%	77%	78%	\$13,600	\$13,078
Wisconsin	66%	81%	84%	87%	\$15,000	\$16,024
Wyoming	69%	70%	83%	81%	\$18,500	\$15,999

1 Source: Agreed-upon targets established through negotiations between VETS and State Workforce Agencies.

2 Source: Labor Exchange Reporting System (LERS), PY 2015 VETS 200A report, as of 6-30-2016.

Appendix 2: VETS FY 2017 Learning Agenda

Below are items in VETS' five-year Learning Agenda, developed in coordination with the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO).

Recently Completed Projects from the FY16 Learning Agenda or Related Studies

Providing Services to Veterans through the Public Workforce System: Descriptive Findings from WIA Gold Standard Evaluation: Volume I and Volume II

The WIA Gold Standard evaluation includes supplementary components specifically focused on service delivery processes for veterans and analysis of the characteristics, services, and outcomes of all veteran participants of the study sites.

This report was completed in 2015. See

https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_resultDetails&pub_id=2569&mp=y

Exploring Reemployment Strategies for Army Veterans: Implementation of State Pilots of the Army Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members (UCX) Claimants Initiative)

This study examines the extent to which the goals of individual UCX grants and the overall objectives of the initiative were achieved. Research questions include how veterans receive services through the Army UCX Claimants initiative, as well as broader questions related to how veterans receive services in American Job Centers (AJCs), their characteristics, service receipt, and employment outcomes. It also documents the project activities undertaken for possible replication in other states.

This report was completed in 2016. See https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/ArmyUCX_ImplementReport_Final.pdf.

Also, a small special topic paper was completed and will be released soon.

The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP): Implementation Study and Feasibility of an Impact Study

This qualitative study describes how the program operates and how the relevant stakeholders – such as military personnel, participants, and employers – perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The study considers in what ways the USMAP has been drawing on the experience of the Army Apprenticeship Program (AAP). The evaluability assessment considers available data, the ability to collect and compile additional data, potential comparison groups and/or natural experiments, and the potential for estimating impacts on military and post-military civilian outcomes.

This report was completed in 2015. See [https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/The_United_Services_Military_Apprenticeship_Program_\(USMAP\).pdf](https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/The_United_Services_Military_Apprenticeship_Program_(USMAP).pdf)

Women Veteran Economic and Employment Characteristics

This study provides a quantitative statistical descriptive profile of women veterans and their economic and employment characteristics.

This report was completed in 2016. See <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/WomenVeteranEconomicandEmploymentCharacteristics.pdf>

A Review of the Literature Related to Homeless Veterans Reintegration

This review synthesizes evidence from studies and reports related to homeless veterans, published by the end of 2014 and with a central focus to identify the risk factors for homelessness among veterans. A secondary aim of the review was to identify the promising practices in services and training that help ensure homeless veterans successfully reintegrate into meaningful employment.

This report was completed in 2015. See https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/A_Review_of_the_Literature_Related_to_Homeless_Veteran_Reintegration.pdf

Formative Evaluation of the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP)

This formative study documents the types of services and supports offered by HVRP grantees; identifies potentially promising practices or models; and conducts statistical analysis of administrative data collected by the grantees and other data as applicable on job placement and other outcomes of interest of HVRP participants.

This report was completed in 2016. See https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/Formative_Evaluation_of_the_Homeless_Veterans_Reintegration_Program_Report.pdf

Accessibility of American Job Centers for Persons with Disabilities (including veterans)

This study evaluates the accessibility status of American Job Centers AJCs, and the ways that the public workforce system is serving people with disabilities, including veterans. It also examines the extent to which the workforce development system complies with Federal accessibility regulations.

This report was completed in 2017. See <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AJC-Accessibility-Study.pdf>

Ongoing Projects or Research Under Way

Institutional Analysis of American Job Centers

The purpose of the study is to thoroughly understand and systematically document the institutional characteristics of American Job Centers (AJCs), and to identify variations in service delivery, organization structure, and administration across AJCs.

<https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/23.htm>

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Department of Labor Employment Workshop

The purpose of the study is to conduct a quasi-experimental impact analysis using administrative data to evaluate the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).

<https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/18.htm>

Evaluation of Text/Email Messaging to Increase Engagement of Transitioning Service Members to AJCs

The purpose of this study is to test the use of texts and/or emails as a potential enhancement feature of the Employment Workshop to improve the connection and engagement of transitioning service members to AJCs. The emails/text messages will be sent to transitioning service members during their TAP participation, shortly before they plan to exit the military, and after they exit the military. It plans to also test the use of a financial incentive to connect with the AJCs.

<https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/18.htm>

Department of Labor's Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR)

CLEAR's mission is to make research on labor topics more accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public more broadly so that it can inform their decisions about labor policies and programs. CLEAR identifies and summarizes many types of research, including descriptive statistical studies and outcome analyses, implementation, and causal impact studies. For causal impact studies, CLEAR assesses the strength of the design and methodology in studies that look at the effectiveness of particular policies and programs.

CLEAR topics that have recently been added or are currently being considered under a feasibility review:

- Veterans
- Employment and Training
- Behavioral Insights (across all DOL agencies)
- CLEAR website: <https://clear.dol.gov/>