



**Annual Report to Congress
Fiscal Year 2017**

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

200 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20210

Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	3
I. The Workforce System	6
II. Performance Management	8
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	9
Table 1. DVOP Specialists and LVER Staff Funding	11
Table 2. DVOP-served Participant Statistics	12
Table 3. Weighted Measure Counts of Participants Who Exited the Program and Received Services Delivered by a DVOP Specialist	13
Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program	15
Table 4. HVRP Participant Statistics, PY 2015 and PY 2016	16
The Transition Assistance Program – DOL Employment Workshop and Career Technical Training Track (CTTT)	17
Table 5. Domestic DOL Employment Workshops and Participants, FY 2016 - 2017	18
Table 6. Overseas TAP Workshops and Participants, FY 2016 - 2017	18
Table 7. CTTT Workshops and Participants, FY 2016 - 2017	19
HIRE Vets Medallion Program	20
Veterans Employer Outreach Program	20
Compliance and Investigations	21
Table 10. FY 2017 Veterans’ Preference Cases	25
Table 11. FY 2017 Veterans’ Preference Case Outcomes	25
Table 12. Annual Federal Contractor Reporting as of September 2017	27
Interagency Collaboration	28
Table 13. PY 2016 Participation in DOL/ETA Programs.....	30
Table 14. FY 2016 and 2017 VR&E Outcomes (number of participants or wages)	32
Online and Electronic Tools	33
Advisory Committee on Veterans’ Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO).....	35
Legislative Proposals	36
Appendix 1: VETS FY 2018 Learning Agenda – Ongoing Projects	37

Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.), 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 10/1/2016 – 9/30/2017 (FY 2017), while data collected on a program year basis is presented from 7/1/2016 – 6/30/2017 (PY 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 2017, 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 continued to connect employers across the country with job-ready veterans. VETS programs help veterans prepare for and fill the jobs being created by the nation's employers. The new HIRE Vets Medallion program will encourage more employers to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. Expanded apprenticeship opportunities will assist veterans in finding meaningful and family sustaining careers. This year, VETS added the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Career Technical Training Track (CTTT) to our suite of tools to help match veteran skills to good jobs. VETS also provided targeted support to homeless veterans by funding Stand Down activities in communities affected by hurricanes following this year's extensive hurricane season. VETS employees are dedicated to the mission of providing veterans and their spouses the employment services they deserve.

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 Individualized Career Services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, including disabled veterans, and other eligible veterans as determined by the Secretary of Labor (Secretary). 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 veteran hiring 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 the workforce. During PY 2016, the HVRP successfully placed 10,769 previously homeless

veterans on a path to self-sufficiency. Of note, Houston held three separate Stand Down events for homeless veterans affected by Hurricane Harvey. During these events, 880 homeless veterans received assistance.

The **TAP DOL Employment Workshop** provides valuable assistance to transitioning service members and their spouses by giving them the tools necessary for a successful transition from military service to civilian employment. 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 April 2017, the Department assumed responsibility for the TAP CTTT from the Department of Veterans Affairs. CTTT is an additional two-day workshop focusing on career exploration and planning. The workshop emphasizes apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials for transitioning service members and their spouses.

In addition, VETS is responsible for compliance investigations and reporting under several statutes. 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 total number of protected veterans they 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.¹

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) went into effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment.² WIOA provides more opportunities for aligning services with the needs of veterans. PY 2016/FY 2017 is the first year of WIOA performance reporting. Due to inherent data lag associated with some outcomes, not all WIOA-related data are available at the time of this report's publication. In addition to performance outcome data not being available, it is important to note that some data elements that existed previously may not yet be available, or may have changed definition and not be directly comparable to previous data elements.

In 2017, the veteran unemployment rate was 3.7 percent – the lowest since 2001. While this is good news, there is still work to be done in serving the unemployed and underemployed veterans in the labor force. The report that follows discusses how the various programs administered by VETS, along with partner agencies, helped to facilitate smooth transitions to civilian employment for those serving in our military, and provided continuing employment assistance for veterans, military spouses, and caregivers.

¹ 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 Fed. Reg. 38293, 38298 (July 2, 2015) (adjusting VEVRAA's procurement related threshold).

² 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.

I. The Workforce System

VETS coordinates with ETA to serve veterans through the public workforce system – a system that supports economic growth and provides workers and employers with important resources and support to maximize employment opportunities.

Primarily, the workforce system offers assistance through the nationwide network of nearly 2,400 one-stop job assistance centers (referred to as American Job Centers, or AJCs), which includes DOL programs as well as other state, local, and Federal partners. Last year more than 5.5 million Americans, including nearly 400,000 veterans, received staff-assisted employment assistance at an American Job Center. This assistance may include job search services, career planning and counseling, or job training.

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 requires 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 annual 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.

DOL assessed Priority of Service by measuring the proportion of veterans who received services within 45 days of accessing the workforce system, totaling 97 percent in FY 2017. It should be noted that this calculation does not account for veterans who chose not to pursue staff-assisted services after the first workforce system contact.

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.

Veterans participate in workforce programs at roughly the same rate as what is represented in the national labor force. In 2017, veterans made up 6.4 percent of the labor force, while accounting for roughly 6.9 percent of the clientele base in the public workforce system; this is discussed in more detail later in this report.

DOL CHIEF EVALUATION OFFICE

In FY 2017, the Department's Chief Evaluation Office had several veteran-related studies ongoing. The topics of these studies include: an evaluation of HVRP; a research study design for veteran employment services and outcomes; an institutional analysis of American Job Centers; and an evaluation of the effectiveness of TAP, including effectiveness of email messaging to transitioning service members. A brief synopsis of each study along with a link to the full published report can be found in Appendix 1.

II. Performance Management

VETS programs address the Department's Strategic Goal 1: *Support the Ability of All Americans to Find Good Jobs*. As described below, VETS programs have materially contributed to this goal, yielding significant results for veterans and service members who are transitioning to the civilian workforce.

PRIMARY INDICATORS USED TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

PY 2016 marked the first year of WIOA data collection and reporting. VETS' programs will utilize four primary indicators of performance provided for in WIOA, listed below. However, due to inherent lags in the data necessary to compute these metrics, no outcome information for PY 2016 is available.

- **Employment Rate in the 2nd Quarter after Exit:** the percentage of participants served who are employed in the second quarter after exit from the program.
- **Employment Rate in the 4th Quarter after Exit:** the percentage of participants served who are employed in the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
- **Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit:** the mid-point of all quarterly wages earned in the second quarter after exit, ranked from lowest to highest.
- **Effectiveness in Serving Employers:** this measure is in a pilot phase and states are instructed to report on two of the following metrics: participant retention with the same employer from 2nd quarter after exit to 4th quarter after exit; repeat business customers as a count of businesses who re-use workforce services over a three-year period; and employer penetration rate as the proportion of businesses who are using the core program services out of all employers represented in an area or state served by the public workforce system.

DOL measures outcomes for all staff-assisted participants in workforce system programs. For its part, VETS measures outcomes using the WIOA primary indicators of performance mentioned above in its formula grants and competitive grants programs; these are discussed in more detail in the following pages of this report.

Jobs for Veterans State Grants

VETS offers employment and training services at American Job Centers nationwide through the JVSG program. This program assists veterans with significant barriers to employment and other eligible individuals, to facilitate their transition to civilian employment, and to assist employers in filling their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans.^{4, 5}

VETS provides funds to states to support three types of staff positions: Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and Consolidated Positions which are described below. States in turn provide funding allocation plans, which include various 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 state 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 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES

LVER staff promote veteran hiring through outreach activities that build relationships with local employers with the goal of connecting employers across the country with job-ready veterans. Often, LVERs are part of a state's business service team. LVERs coordinate with DVOP specialists and other AJC staff to seamlessly transition veteran clients into appropriate employment in the local community.

CONSOLIDATED POSITION

Consolidated DVOP/LVER positions are considered, by request, to allow states flexibility to provide appropriate employment services for veterans and employer support in areas currently underserved or where the assignment of only full time DVOP specialists and full-time LVER staff would be impractical.

⁴ In addition to veterans with significant barriers to employment, all veterans ages 18-24 are 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), available at <https://www.dol.gov/vets/VMS/VPLs/VPL-04-14.pdf>.

⁵ 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.

DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING FOR DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF

Quality training is essential 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 from VETS. In FY 2017, 100 percent of staff completed core training within the 18-month required timeframe, including 192 staff completing the DVOP Core Competency Development course, 248 staff completing the Facilitating Veterans Employment course, and 132 staff completing the Employer Outreach course. The FY 2017 total number of staff who received training is lower than the prior fiscal year due to a change in the contractor operating the institute. Roughly six months of FY 2017 involved the refreshing of course content, hiring and training qualified instructors, and resolving technical issues related to the deployment of online learning courses.

DVOP AND LVER STAFF AND FUNDING 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:

- 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
- 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 2016 and FY 2017 funding and staffing levels for DVOP specialists and LVER staff.⁶

⁶ As reported in the Veterans' Employment and Training Operations and Program Activity Report (VOPAR) System, FY 2017 (ending September 30, 2017) Staffing, Spending and Funding Balance Worksheet.

Table 1. DVOP Specialists and LVER Staff Funding⁷

DVOP Specialists	FY 2016	FY 2017	Change
DVOP Funding	\$114,234,592	\$116,436,068	\$2,201,476
Projected DVOP Staffing	1,445	1,392	-53
Actual DVOP Positions Supported	1,286	1,237	-49
Average Cost per Position	\$88,829	\$94,128	\$5,299
LVER Staff	FY 2016	FY 2017	Change
LVER Funding	\$56,510,920	\$54,241,316	-\$2,269,604
Projected LVER Staffing	664	561	-103
Actual LVER Positions Supported	529	515	-14
Average Cost per Position	\$106,826	\$105,323	-\$1,503
Consolidated Position Staff	FY 2016	FY 2017	Change
Projected Consolidated Funding	N/A	\$877,052	N/A
Projected Consolidated Staffing	N/A	12	N/A
Actual Consolidated Positions Supported	N/A	10	N/A
Average Cost per Position	N/A	\$87,705	N/A

As Table 1 shows, the number of DVOP specialists and LVER staff remained relatively steady over the year, with only slight reductions in each. States continue to meet the goal of providing Individualized Career Services to JVSG participants, which is the primary responsibility of DVOP specialists.

JVSG SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS

In PY 2016, 113,211 participants⁸ were referred to DVOP 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 in 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.

⁷ 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 drafted.

⁸ This figure represents the unduplicated participant count of veterans and transitioning service members served by DVOP specialists, as reported in the Workforce Integrated Performance System. Data as of 6/30/2017.

Table 2. DVOP-served Participant Statistics*

Population or Sub-Population	PY 2015	PY 2016	Percentage Difference
Veterans and other eligible spouses served (percentage of total)	154,796	113,211	N/A
Disabled veterans	52,101 (34%)	33,474 (30%)	-4%
Long-Term Unemployed	N/A	3,560 (3%)	N/A
Female veterans	19,830 (13%)	16,706 (15%)	+2%
Homeless veterans	15,529 (10%)	12,989 (11%)	+1%

**On February 11, 2014, VETS released refocusing guidance emphasizing LVERs' assigned duties to promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring veterans. As such, data for direct services to veterans by LVERs was not collected in PY 2016. The data element to collect the appropriate services provided by LVER staff has been reinstated in PY 2018.*

Data for WIOA outcomes are not available from PY 2016. The WIOA performance indicators data will be available in PY 2017 and will be analyzed and compared to other DOL employment programs, and targets will be established for PY 2018. While the overall drop in participants is largely due to an improving economy, the proportions of sub-populations served in PY 2016 is roughly the same as observed in PY 2015.

WEIGHTED OUTCOMES

The JVSG program uses a weighted outcome measure based on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendation 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.”⁹

Under this system, a veteran who receives Individualized Career Services through the JVSG program receives a value, or weight, of 1.25, while all other participants receive a weight of 1.0. This weighting incentivizes case managers to provide higher proportions of intensive services. It should also be noted that this GAO finding came at a time when JVSG delivered intensive services at a significantly lower rate. Currently, approximately 90 percent of all services provided by DVOP specialists are intensive/Individualized Career Services. As noted earlier, not all WIOA-related data is available at the time of this report’s publication, so weighted outcomes are not available for PY 2016. Instead, shown below are the counts of staff-assisted veterans and those who received intensive/Individualized Career Services. This decrease from PY 2015 was largely due to favorable economic conditions during PY 2016 leading to lower demand for services.

⁹ Government Accountability Office Report 07-594, *Labor Could Improve Information on Reemployment Services, Outcomes, and Program Impact*, May 2007.

Table 3. Weighted Measure Counts of Participants Who Exited the Program and Received Services Delivered by a DVOP Specialist

Weighted Veterans Measure	PY 2015	PY 2016	% Change
Number of Veterans Who Received Staff Assisted Services	132,769	110,492	-16.8%
Number of Veterans Who Received Intensive Services/Individualized Career Services	116,948	104,309	-10.8%

IMPLEMENTING A UNIFORM NATIONAL THRESHOLD VETERANS’ ENTERED EMPLOYMENT RATE

The JVA amended 38 U.S.C. 4102A(c)(3)(B) to require that the Secretary 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 CFR part 1001 (78 Fed. Reg. 15283), published on March 11, 2013 with an effective date of May 10, 2013.

The UNTEER cannot be computed for PY 2016. Section 506(b) of WIOA made new performance indicators and definitions effective July 1, 2016, including for the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service. As a result of this transition to the new WIOA reporting system, a complete year of entered employment data for veterans that exited during the transition is not available. Since the PY 2016 UNTEER cannot be calculated, the Department cannot require a corrective action plan or take actions available under 20 CFR 1001.130(a) based on the PY 2016 UNTEER. States are required to continue to upload accurate and complete data through the Workforce Integrated Reporting System so that the Department is able to continue UNTEER analysis in the future.

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.¹⁰ Further, states have the option to decline the allocation of incentive award funds. In FY 2017, 23 state agencies declined receipt of incentive award funds due to legislative restrictions, state policies, union

¹⁰ 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.

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 2017, VETS set aside \$1,732, 873 for the incentive funds. Of this available amount, 31 state agencies (including agencies in the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands) used \$1,074,249 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 2016 included state and local workforce development 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 important 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 Program grantees, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans' Affairs Supportive Housing program, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Supportive Services for Veteran Families 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 valuable resources to help grantees achieve job placement and retention goals through case management, direct employer contact, job development, and follow-up services.

In FY 2017, Congress appropriated \$45 million to DOL for HVRP. DOL awarded funds to 155 grantees. Specifically, DOL awarded 74 newly-competed grants, and DOL approved 81 grantees to receive option-year funding. These include awards to targeted programs designed to address the employment barriers of specific veteran populations, as follows:

- In FY 2016, VETS issued Veterans' Program Letter 03-16 mandating that all homeless veteran program participants must be enrolled in the public workforce system at an American Job Center. In PY 2016, roughly half of the HVRP participants were co-enrolled in American Job Centers. VETS anticipates co-enrollment 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. Outcomes to verify this will be available at the end of PY 2017 (August 2018).

In addition to a strong employment placement rate of over 68 percent in FY 2017, table 4 provides performance information from the HVRP program for the previous two program years. HVRP enrollment data remained essentially unchanged from PY 2015. Cost per participant remained virtually the same as last year, and average hourly wage at placement increased from \$12.19 to \$12.85 per hour.

Table 4. HVRP Participant Statistics, PY 2015 and PY 2016¹¹

	Participants Enrolled			Average Cost per Participant			Average Cost per Placement			Average Hourly Wage at Placement		
	PY 2015	PY 2016	Change	PY 2015	PY 2016	Change	PY 2015	PY 2016	Change	PY 2015	PY 2016	Change
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program	16,638	16,096	-542	\$2,007	\$2,087	+\$6	\$3,036	\$3,102	+\$66	\$12.19	\$12.87	+\$0.68
HVRP Subset: Homeless Female Veterans and Veterans with Families	701	3,328	+2,627	\$2,924	N/A	N/A	\$4,092	N/A	N/A	\$15.41	\$13.90	-\$1.51
HVRP Subset: Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program	414	1,604	+1,174	\$3,444	N/A	N/A	\$6,524	N/A	N/A	\$11.34	\$12.27	+\$0.93

HOMELESS VETERANS' STAND DOWN GRANTS

In FY 2017, VETS utilized a portion of HVRP funds to support “Stand Down” events.¹² 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. Through these events alone, 880 homeless veterans received assistance. In particular, Stand Down organizers partner with local businesses and social service providers to offer the following 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 \$411,576 for 51 Stand Down events in FY 2017 including \$880,000 for events in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

¹¹ 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 drafted.

¹² 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 and Career Technical Training Track (CTTT)

The TAP for separating and retiring service members and their spouses, provided under 10 U.S.C. 1144, is a cooperative effort among DOL, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, VA, the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management. VETS administers the DOL Employment Workshop as a required 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. The number of Employment Workshops DOL provides is based on the requirements 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 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 April 2017, the Department assumed responsibility for the TAP CTTT. CTTT is an additional optional two-day workshop focused on exploration of apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials for transitioning service members and their spouses; this course supplements the required DOL Employment Workshop. The CTTT provides these service members with an opportunity to identify their relevant skills, increase their awareness of training and apprenticeship programs that can lead to industry-recognized credentials and meaningful careers, and develop an action plan to achieve their career goals. The revised CTTT curriculum covers four themes: (1) personal assessment using three assessment tools; (2) researching specific career fields of interest; (3) understanding training requirements and identifying training opportunities; and (4) establishing goals and develop a detailed plan to achieve those goals.

In FY 2017, the interagency partners collected and analyzed survey results regarding participants' satisfaction with the TAP curriculum and delivery methods. Results indicated 97 percent reported that they would use what they learned in their own transition planning and 95 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 2017, DOL conducted an in-depth review and revision of the DOL Employment Workshop and CTTT curricula. As part of the in-depth review process, DOL discussed the curricula with internal and external stakeholders providing them an opportunity to review the material and respond with input. Based on feedback received, DOL updated the Employment Workshop curriculum to improve the flow of the material presented, remove outdated practices, update the social media section, and emphasize the importance of taking advantage of the supplemental training tracks – Accessing Higher Education, Entrepreneurship track, and CTTT.

The Department’s intent is to highlight how it is in the interest of the transitioning service member to focus on a long-term career, not just a temporary job, by obtaining a degree, industry recognized credential, or an apprenticeship.

In January 2015, VETS completed a two-year pilot program to provide the TAP DOL Employment Workshop to veterans and their spouses at locations other than military installations stipulated in the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2013 (P.L. 112-260). In total, VETS conducted 21 pilot workshops in three states: Georgia, Washington, and West Virginia. Out of 250 total participants, 63 percent were within the 25-44 age group. On average, 12 participants attended each workshop (ranging from 2 to 37 participants per workshop) and one workshop had to be cancelled due to a lack of participation. While participants in the pilot program found it helpful, the components of the program that rated most beneficial are the same components found in the workforce system. Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated the resume writing instruction to be the most beneficial, while 32 percent indicated interview skills as the most helpful. From this pilot, VETS gained a better understanding of the broad spectrum of individual employment needs among the veteran population, indicating the limitations of a single program of instruction. Additionally, it was a challenge for many of the participants to remain in the workshop for the entire three days due to personal and professional commitments. DOL believes this was a contributing factor to the low participation rates.

DOMESTIC WORKSHOP

As displayed in Table 5, DOL Employment Workshop activity decreased in workshops and participants between FY 2016 and FY 2017 based on DoD demand. The figures in the tables below come from attendance counts from course administrators.

Table 5. Domestic DOL Employment Workshops and Participants, FY 2016 - 2017

Category	FY 2016	FY 2017	Change
Workshops	5,685	5,463	-222
Participants	169,464	150,987	-18,477

OVERSEAS DOL EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

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 6 shows the number of participants in the DOL Employment Workshop overseas decreased between FY 2016 and FY 2017, based on DoD demand.

Table 6. Overseas TAP Workshops and Participants, FY 2016 - 2017

Category	FY 2016	FY 2017	Change
Workshops	628	634	+6
Participants	14,576	13,391	-1,185

Additionally, in FY 2017, VETS conducted regularly scheduled Wounded Warrior DOL Employment Workshops at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and Fort Riley,

Kansas. The military services' projected demand for the DOL Employment Workshops is expected to remain consistent with that of FY 2017 for the foreseeable future.

CTTT COURSES DELIVERED

In April 2017, the Department assumed responsibility for the TAP CTTT from the VA. As displayed in the table below, the CTTT workshops and participants reflect the roughly six-months in FY 2017 that DOL facilitated the workshop and tracked participants.

Table 7. CTTT Workshops and Participants, FY 2016 - 2017

Category	FY 2016	FY 2017	Change
Workshops	N/A	919	N/A
Participants	N/A	6,908	N/A

TAP DATA ANALYTICS

In FY 2016, VETS began the data transfer process from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) 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. Currently, based on E-form data sent to DOL from DMDC, VETS sends emails to transitioning service members to highlight the importance of participating in the DOL Employment Workshop as early as possible to provide employment tools that support the transition process. As of May 2018, over 237,000 transitioning service members have been provided DOL resources through this automated email.

For those unable to attend TAP in-person, VETS makes available on its website the TAP Virtual Curriculum, as well as the TAP Employment Workshop Participant Guide. In addition, the Department initiated development of a TAP mobile application (app). The purpose of this mobile app is to provide online tools for transitioning service members in a format that is accessible from a smartphone. The app will provide access to a full suite of the CareerOneStop mobile tools, and will include DOL TAP course materials. Additionally, the app will provide transition checklists and automated notifications.

HIRE Vets Medallion Program

The Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act of 2017 (HIRE Vets Act or the Act), signed by President Trump on May 5, 2017, requires the Secretary to establish a program, by rule, that recognizes employer efforts to recruit, employ, and retain veterans. Employer-applicants meeting criteria established in the rule will receive a “HIRE Vets Medallion Award.” As described in the Act, there are different awards for large employers (500-plus employees), medium employers (51-499 employees), and small employers (50 or fewer employees). Additionally, there are two award tiers: Gold and Platinum.

DOL published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on August 18, 2017. VETS thoroughly evaluated and carefully considered all comments received. The Final Rule was announced by the Secretary on November 9, 2017, became effective in January 2018, and is available for viewing on the [Federal Register website](#).

DOL VETS is conducting a HIRE Vets Medallion Program (HVMP) Demonstration in 2018 that will use the same criteria established in the law and later clarified in the Final Rule. Under the demonstration, VETS accepted 300 applications from employers. Employers who successfully apply and meet the demonstration criteria will receive recognition from the Secretary of Labor. Additional information about the Final Rule and demonstration can be found on the website at www.hirevets.gov or by contacting HIREVets@dol.gov.

VETS will begin accepting applications for the full HVMP award in January 2019.

Veterans Employer Outreach Program

VETS continues a robust Veteran Employment Outreach Program (VEOP) to make it easier for companies to find, hire, train and retain veterans by leveraging federal, state, and local resources. VEOP’s National-to-Local engagement and integration strategy informs and coordinates action among government, private sector and local communities to enhance veterans’ employment opportunities and to leverage the national workforce system and their network of over 2,400 AJCs nationwide. VEOP provides a valuable bridge between national and regional employers who are eager to hire veterans and workforce development staff at AJCs who build relationships with local employers and assist veterans in gaining meaningful employment.

In FY17, VETS implemented a Customer Relationship Management tool to track employer engagements and added to the VEOP mission statement to recognize VETS’ role in consulting with larger companies on workforce needs, educating them on resources available to them, and assisting them with developing apprenticeships to address skill gaps and to attract more veterans.

Compliance and Investigations

VETS is responsible for administering the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), investigating complaints alleging violations of veterans preference in federal hiring, and federal contractor data reporting under 38 U.S.C. 4212.

USERRA

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; minimizing 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 prohibiting discrimination against persons because of their service in the uniformed services.

In FY 2017, VETS opened 944 USERRA cases. Tables 8 and 9 display the total number of USERRA cases investigated during FY 2017 and case outcomes. Of the 944 complaints received in FY 2017, and the 154 cases carried over from FY 2016, VETS investigated and closed 926 cases. On average, cases were resolved in 56 days.

Of the 926 USERRA cases investigated and closed in FY 2017, 213 (23 percent) received a determination of merit. VETS completed investigations in 601 (64.9 percent) of the 926 cases. The remaining 325 cases were closed administratively, withdrawn by the claimant, or the claimant elected not to proceed with the incomplete investigation beyond the 90-day time frame allowed by statute.

Table 8. FY 2017 USERRA Cases¹³

Category or Subcategory	Number or Percentage of Cases
Total Cases	1,098
Cases Carried Forward from FY 2016	154
Cases Opened During FY 2017	944
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Military Obligations Discrimination¹⁴	393
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Reinstatement	162
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Other Non-Seniority Benefits	21
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Promotion	62
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Vacation	13
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Status	18
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Pay Rate	29
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Reasonable Accommodation/Retraining for Non-Qualified/Non-Disabled	3
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Discrimination as Retaliation for Any Action	110
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Seniority	13
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Pension	33
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Initial Hiring Discrimination	61
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Layoff	38
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Special Protected Period Discharge	7
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Health Benefits	8
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Reasonable Accommodations/Retraining for Disabled	16
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Other	39
Total Cases Investigated and Closed During FY 2017¹⁵	926
Percent of FY 2017 Cases Closed within 90 days	87.6%
Average Number of Total Elapsed Days Case Was Open	56

¹³ As reported by the USERRA Information Management System.

¹⁴ Because many USERRA cases involve multiple issues, the total number of cases counted among the 17 issues listed in this chart exceeds the 944 new unique cases reported by VETS in FY 2017.

¹⁵ This closed case count only includes cases that were investigated and closed in the fiscal year for which the report represents. In addition, 13 other closures from past fiscal years were reviewed and prepared by VETS pursuant to the claimant's FY 2017 request for referral to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) or to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) – 10 for FY 2016 closures (2 “Merit, Not Resolved”; 7 “No Merit”; and 1 “Not Eligible”), and 3 for FY 2015 closures (2 “Merit, Not Resolved”; and 1 “Not Eligible”).

Table 9. FY 2017 USERRA Case Outcomes

Category or Subcategory	Number of Cases
Total Cases Investigated and Closed	926
Cases Closed Due to "Merit Finding"	213
<i>Claim Granted</i>	95
<i>Claim Settled</i>	75
<i>Merit, Not Resolved</i>	43
Cases Closed Due to "No Merit Finding"	344
<i>No Merit</i>	344
Cases Closed Due to "Not Eligible"	44
Cases Closed Due to "Merit Determination Not Made"	325
<i>Administratively Closed</i>	59
<i>Claim Withdrawn</i>	265
<i>Merit Undetermined</i>	1
Total Cases Converted to VP Claims	0
Total Cases Still Pending	164

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>). The FY 2017 USERRA Annual Report to Congress is scheduled for release in July 2018.

VETS conducts a robust public outreach campaign to educate service members, employers, and others on their rights and responsibilities under USERRA. VETS provides an online USERRA Advisor (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>), which assists veterans in understanding employee eligibility, job entitlements, and obligations, as well as employer obligations, benefits, and remedies under USERRA. The USERRA Advisor assists employees in assessing the potential validity of their complaint and provides individuals the ability to electronically file USERRA complaints. In FY 2017, VETS also provided technical assistance and conducted outreach to more than 7,000 individuals nationwide, including service members, members of professional groups, and the general public.

VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT

Under 5 U.S.C. 3304(f), as added by the Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA), preference-eligibles or veterans who 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 a Federal agency violated their rights 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 file a case to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) against the agency determined to have violated his or her veterans' preference 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.¹⁶

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 Office of Special Counsel (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 with authority over personnel decisions may not:

- knowingly take, recommend, or approve any personnel action if the taking of such action would violate a veterans' preference requirement; or
- 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 occurs after VETS' investigation and attempt to settle a case. Further, OSC's review does not impact 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 Veterans' Preference 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 Veterans' Preference 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 10 and 11 display the total number of Veterans' Preference cases investigated during FY 2017 and case outcomes. Of the 384 complaints received in FY 2017, and the 35 cases carried over from FY 2016, VETS closed 383 cases. On average, cases were resolved in 24 days.

¹⁶ Claimants may elect to terminate an MSPB proceeding and file an action with a U.S. district court if the case is pending at the MSPB for more than 120 days. 5 U.S.C. 3330b.

Of the 383 Veterans' Preference cases closed in FY 2017, 10 (2.6 percent) received a finding of merit. VETS completed investigations in 310 (80.9 percent) of the 383 cases. The remaining 73 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.¹⁷

Table 10. FY 2017 Veterans' Preference Cases¹⁸

Category or Subcategory	Number or Percentage of Cases
Total Cases	419
Cases Carried Forward from FY 2016	35
Cases Opened During FY 2017	384
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Hiring	374
FY 2017 Opened Cases - Issue Reduction in Force	10
Total Cases Closed During FY 2017	383
Percent of FY 2017 Cases Closed within 60 days	94.8%
Percent of FY 2017 Cases Closed within 90 days	99.2%
Average Number of Days Case Was Open	24

Table 11. FY 2017 Veterans' Preference Case Outcomes

Category or Subcategory	Number of Cases
Total Cases Closed	383
Cases Closed Due to "Merit Finding"	10
<i>Hiring</i>	10
<i>Reduction in Force</i>	0
Cases Closed Due to "No Merit Finding"	228
<i>Hiring</i>	223
<i>Reduction in Force</i>	5
Cases Closed Due to "Not Eligible"	19
Cases Closed Due to "Untimely Filed"	53
Cases Closed Due to "Merit Determination Not Made"	73
<i>Administratively Closed</i>	20
<i>Claim Withdrawn</i>	46
<i>Merit Undetermined</i>	5
<i>Duplicate</i>	2
Total Cases Converted to USERRA Claims	0
Total Cases Still Pending	36

¹⁷ 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 the complaint is filed with VETS. 5 U.S.C. 3330a(d).

¹⁸ 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 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, 2003.¹⁹ 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 12 provides a summary of the reports filed during FY 2017.

¹⁹ 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 Fed. Reg. 38293, 38298 (July 2, 2015).

Table 12. Annual Federal Contractor Reporting as of September 2017²⁰

Category	2016 VETS-4212	2017 VETS-4212	Change
Total Federal Contractors Filing	12,729	16,467	3,738
Total Submitted Reports	213,576	334,836	121,260
Single Establishment	5,840	7,880	2,040
Multiple Establishment – Headquarters	5,853	7,368	1,515
Multiple Establishment – Hiring Location	196,967	311,896	114,929
Multiple Establishment – State Consolidated	4,916	7,692	2,776
All Protected Veterans Employed	742,469	1,000,717	258,248
Total All Employees	18,081,467	26,470,728	8,389,261
All Protected Veterans Newly Hired	170,154	252,266	82,112
Total All New Hires	4,537,851	6,957,115	2,419,264

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. In FY 2017, OFCCP concluded 1,142 neutrally scheduled compliance evaluations, and, of these, 122 (or 11%) remedied VEVRAA violations. Also, OFCCP processed 124 complaints on the basis of VEVRAA.

²⁰ The numbers reflected in this table for 2017 included VETS-4212 reports filed after the filing season ended on September 30. Due to several factors beyond contractors’ control (e.g. severe weather), the Department allowed filing beyond the season deadline without penalty.

Interagency Collaboration

WOMEN'S BUREAU

The Women's Bureau and VETS maintain a collaborative relationship relating to women veterans and military spouses. 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 and military spouses to their workforce.

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.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is an important partner of VETS in order to gain a better understanding of how veterans compare to non-veterans in labor force participation, unemployment rates, and occupational analyses. VETS and VA also directly fund a "veteran supplement" which provides additional survey results on an annual basis to complement the monthly employment survey.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

As mentioned in Section I (The Workforce System), VETS collaborates with 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 includes a veteran focus, and that statistics and analytics for veteran outcomes are able to be achieved.

WIOA 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. WIOA reauthorized the Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs previously authorized under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. With the new reporting requirements, states submitted their first WIOA performance reports in October 2017. Full WIOA performance outcomes will not be available until October 2019.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA or 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 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 2017, roughly 3,500 veterans received assistance through TAA.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER 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 veterans, and meet the increased demand for WIOA employment and training

services. Depending on the circumstances, DWG funds can be used to temporarily employ dislocated workers or provide assistance that helps them obtain new work. WIOA makes DWG resources available to areas experiencing higher than average demand for employment and training activities for dislocated veterans 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.

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship programs combine paid work experience with job-related technical instruction. Apprenticeships have historically prepared workers to obtain high-skilled, high-paying jobs that help employers build their qualified workforce.

VETERANS' PARTICIPATION RATES FOR FY 2017

In calendar year 2017, veterans made up 6.4 percent of the civilian labor force, ages 18 and over.²¹ As displayed in Table 13, data for PY 2016 indicate that ETA's adult employment and training programs served nearly 400,000 veterans among over 5.5 million participants at an American Job Center, which results in a participation rate for veterans of 6.7 percent, an increase of 0.2 percent from PY 2015. The veteran unemployment rate in calendar year 2017 was 3.7 percent for veterans compared to 4.2 percent for nonveterans.²²

Among ETA programs, the highest veterans' participation rates were recorded by the Senior Community Service Employment program (12.4 percent) and the DWG program (8.5 percent). The number of veterans participating in Registered Apprenticeships totaled over 35,000 and the percentage of veterans in these programs (9.2 percent) exceeded the veteran participation rate in the labor force (6.4 percent). These, as well as the Wagner-Peyser program (7.1 percent), had participation rates at or above the veteran participation rate in the labor force. 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 particularly encouraging because these programs provide a pathway into family sustaining careers.

²¹ Based on BLS Current Population Survey (Not Seasonally Adjusted).

²² 2017 statistics on veterans and nonveterans are available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat48.pdf>.

Table 13. PY 2016 Participation in DOL/ETA Programs

PY 2016 DOL/ETA ADULT PROGRAMS	Number of Veterans Participating or Completing Services²³	Total Number of Individuals**	Veterans' Participation Rate in DOL Programs
Wagner-Peyser Employment Service	386,059	5,414,815	7.1%
WIOA Adults	45,962*	954,961	4.8%*
WIOA Dislocated Workers	24,607*	469,567	5.2%*
WIOA Youth	274*	154,693	0.2%*
Dislocated Worker Grants	1,850*	21,854	8.5%*
Senior Community Services Employment Program – Ages 55+ (Veterans and Eligible Spouses)	7,439	60,002	12.4%
Indian and Native American Program	113	6,273	1.8%
National Farmworker Jobs Program	119	172	0.9%
Total²⁴	439,054*	6,602,542**	6.65%

Sources: Program data derived from ETA reporting systems, which track participation levels and services offered to participants. These various systems include: Workforce Integration Performance System (WIPS); 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 2016 programs are for the period of July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017. Data is based on PY16 Q4 ETA-9173 National Summary

*Based on the DOL definition of “veteran” for purposes of providing priority of service. Previously used all veterans. Total individuals does not account for co-enrollment in multiple programs.

**Note that due to WIOA, changes to the definition of “participant” have led to much lower “participant” numbers despite relatively similar service provision levels.

SERVING VETERANS ENROLLED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS CHAPTER 31 PROGRAM

The Department partners with the VA to provide efficient and seamless service to the veterans with disabilities who receive services through the VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program (38 U.S. Code, Chapter 31). 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 local labor market information (LMI) to be used in the veteran’s Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP), complete rehabilitation planning, assess job readiness, provide employment services (ES), and assist the veteran in securing suitable employment.

In FY 2017, the partnership strengthened through greater coordination at the local level. A local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template enabled all partners to develop their own local

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

MOUs to be signed by VETS' Director for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVET), the VA VR&E Director, and the state agency. By the end of the fiscal year, every location executed a local MOU. These MOUs contain the specific 100 percent referral criteria for providing LMI and ES and further delineate each partner's roles and responsibilities. As relationships and processes continue to mature at the local level, referrals and positive outcomes are expected to continue increasing.

PARTICIPANTS AND OUTCOMES OF VETERNS ENROLLED IN THE JOINT PARTNERSHIP

The following table compares data for FY 2016 and FY 2017. Greyed areas indicate new items collected using the reporting tool implemented in FY 2017. The data for FY 2017 indicate the VA referred 11,735 veterans for DOL-funded services, an additional 2,402 or 20.7 percent increase over FY 2016. By type of referral, that equates to 5,871 for LMI (a difference of 1,525 and increase of 35.1 percent over FY 2016) and 5,864 veterans for ES (a difference of 877 and increase of 17.6 percent over FY 2016). Additional analysis of the FY 2017 fourth quarter data indicates that 46 percent of the total LMI referrals were made during that quarter, after most local MOUs were signed and in place.

At the end of FY 2017, eight states reported no referrals for LMI but the leadership of both VETS and VR&E continue working with those states to ensure full implementation of the 100 percent referral criteria. There were 3,539 total cases closed for other than LMI or employment in FY 2017, which is a 61.8 percent increase. This can be attributed to the expanded case closure options, increased emphasis on confirming and appropriately closing cases beyond 18 months since referral and improved emphasis on validating the data prior to submitting it. The number of referred veterans available for work totaled 2,859, a 30.5 percent decrease, over FY 2016. The number of referred veterans available for work reflects those who were either carried into the fiscal year or referred during the fiscal year for ES, who have not been closed at the end of the fiscal year. This figure, coupled with the fact that the state agency received 877 more ES referrals during FY 17, indicates the state agency is closing more cases each fiscal year. The number of veterans who entered other-than-suitable employment totaled 155, a 63.4 percent decrease over FY 2016. The number of veterans who met the VA's definition of being rehabilitated was 1,854, a 28.4 percent increase.

Finally, the average entry hourly wage for those veterans considered rehabilitated totaled \$20.33 in FY 2017, a \$0.85 increase over FY2016. These data indicate that the outcomes achieved by veterans served by this partnership continue to improve. We expect this upward trend to continue.

Table 14. FY 2016 and 2017 VR&E Outcomes (number of participants or wages)²⁵

Category	FY 2016	FY 2017	Number Difference	Percent Change
Veterans Referred from VR&E	9,333	11,735	2,402	+25.7%
Referred for LMI	4,346	5,871	1,525	+35.1%
Referred for Employment Services	4,987	5,864	877	+17.6%
Carried In from previous year's participation	2,639	2,855	216	+8.2%
Closed Cases (other than LMI or employment):				
Financial Disincentive		51		
Family Responsibilities		39		
Medical Reasons		153		
Not Satisfied with Services		47		
Exceeded 18 Months in Job Ready Status		268		
Incarcerated		2		
Pursuing Self-Employment		44		
Returned to Active Duty		5		
Deceased		3		
Moved Out of State		201		
Unable to Locate or Unresponsive Veteran		1,672		
Unwilling or Unable to Relocate for Employment		9		
Interrupted	231			
Discontinued	997			
School (furthering education)	249	382	133	+53.4%
Closed, Other*	710	663	-47	-6.6%
Total Closed Cases (other than LMI or employment)	2,187	3,539	1,352	+61.8%
Referred Veterans Available for Work	4,114	2,859	-1,255	-30.5%
Entered Other Than Suitable Employment	424	155	-269	-63.4%
Rehabilitated	1,444	1,854	410	+28.4%
Avg. Entry Hourly Wage For Those Cons. Rehab.	\$19.48	\$20.33	\$0.85	+4.4%

*Includes employment prior to referral, Maximum Rehabilitation Gained (MRG), and declined AJC services.

²⁵ As reported in the Veterans' Employment and Training Service Operations and Program Activity Report (VOPAR) System, National VR&E Quarter Data Report.

Online and Electronic Tools

Veterans.gov: <http://www.veterans.gov>

VETERANS.GOV is designed to be the virtual “first stop” in the employment search process for veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses -- and for employers in the hiring process. Through VETERANS.GOV, employers receive personalized assistance in finding and employing veterans. VETERANS.GOV provides an easy format for veterans to connect with federal, state and other resources and provides assistance to employers seeking to employ Veterans.

DOL VETS Website: <http://www.dol.gov/vets>

Provides information on DOL VETS’ programs and policies in support of the mission to serve America's transitioning service members, veterans and their spouses by preparing them for meaningful careers, providing employment resources and expertise, protecting their employment rights and promoting their employment opportunities.

HIRE Vets Medallion Program: <http://www.hirevets.gov>

Provides information on The Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing (HIRE) American Military Veterans Medallion Program. The Program recognizes employer efforts to recruit, employ, and retain veterans. Employer-applicants meeting criteria established in the rule will receive a “HIRE Vets Medallion Award.”

Online Advisors (<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/>) – In FY 2017, 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:

- **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.

The Veteran and Military Transition Center

(<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.

TAP Employment Workshop eBook

DOL provides TAP Employment Workshop participants the opportunity to download the [DOL Employment Workshop eBook on Amazon](#). The Department encourages all participants to download the content for preview before the course is taken, as well as to keep for post-course reference.

National Veterans Training Institute

The website <https://nvti.org> was developed as a resource to provide information on courses offered, application and tuition costs, and travel information; a repository for helpful DOL and VETS links; and a place to visit to see recent veteran-related workforce news, such as monthly unemployment rates and academic credits provided for military experience.

Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO)

ACVETEO is a Congressionally-mandated advisory committee authorized under 38 U.S.C. § 4110 and is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The ACVETEO shall:

- assess the employment and training needs of veterans and their integration into the workforce;
- determine the extent to which the programs and activities of the Department are meeting such needs;
- assist the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) in carrying out outreach activities to employers with respect to the training and skills of veterans and the advantages afforded employers by hiring veterans;
- make recommendations to the Secretary, through the ASVET, with respect to outreach activities and employment and training needs of veterans; and
- carry out such other activities as necessary to carry out required reports and recommendations.

In FY 2017, ACVETEO met all Title 38 requirements by conducting four quarterly meetings and submitting the FY 2017 ACVETEO Annual Report to Congress on time. The recommendations in the Annual Report will help DOL improve employment programs for transitioning service members, veterans and their spouses. The Annual Report is available at: <https://www.dol.gov/vets/aboutvets/advisorycommittee.htm>.

Legislative Proposals

Below are DOL's legislative recommendations concerning its responsibilities in regard to veteran employment and training.

Program Eligibility Proposals

Since 2014, appropriations language expanded participant eligibility for JVSG services to include transitioning members of the Armed Forces who participated in the Transition Assistance Program and 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.

As proposed in the FY 2019 President's Budget, DOL recommends a technical amendment to 38 U.S.C. 2021(a) to also 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 60 days prior to 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.

Appendix 1: VETS FY 2018 Learning Agenda – Ongoing Projects

Below are items in VETS' five-year Learning Agenda, developed in coordination with the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO). The items listed below represent ongoing evaluations during FY 2017.

1. Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program Impact Evaluation Study

The goals for this study are to evaluate the effectiveness of Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) on participants' employment outcomes, using the most rigorous design feasible (experimental or quasi-experimental methods); and to conduct an implementation evaluation to understand program models and variations, partnerships, and the homeless Veterans served.

The 5-year project was awarded to Mathematica Policy Research in 2017.

2. Veteran Employment Services and Outcomes - Research Study Design

The purpose of this project is to develop a research study design that meets the legislative requirements of Section 502, Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016. The design will identify a rigorous approach to studying three groups of veterans over a five-year period of time: (1) veterans who received intensive services through an American Job Center, (2) veterans who did not receive intensive services but who otherwise received services at an American Job Center, and (3) veterans who neither sought nor received services at an American Job Center. For all of these individuals, the study design is expected to incorporate an extensive array of descriptive and outcome information.

The 15-month project was awarded to Abt Associates in September 2017.

3. Institutional Analysis of American Job Centers

This study's purpose is to thoroughly understand and document the institutional characteristics of AJCs, including activities funded through WIA and through other sources of funding. A number of studies have been conducted on certain aspects of AJCs, previously known as One-Stop Career Centers. However, there is a need to fully understand the administrative and service delivery processes used in AJCs. To further our knowledge of and research on the public workforce system, this institutional analysis will combine administrative data analysis with in-depth implementation analysis of AJCs.

From July through December 2016, the study team, led by Mathematica Policy Research, conducted site visits to 40 AJCs to collect information on its: (1) administrative structure; (2) partnerships; (3) staffing structure; (4) services for job seekers; (5) services for employers; (6) outreach and marketing; (7) data systems and sharing; and (8) funding and resource sharing. On each visit, team members interviewed the LWDB administrators, One-Stop Operator entity staff, and/or AJC manager, AJC partner managers, and front-line staff providing services to AJC job seeker and employer customers. In addition, a brief survey of AJC partners conducted in 19 sites in January through June 2017 in order to further explore AJC partnerships through a network analysis. Results from this work will be available in 2018.

**4. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
Department of Labor Employment Workshop (Phase II)**

The TAP evaluation will test the base hypothesis of the program: the TAP DOL Employment Workshop reduces the number of weeks participants spend unemployed between separation from the military and entry to their first civilian job. Additionally, the evaluation will assess the differential effects of enhancements to TAP program workshops on employment outcomes.

To test the hypothesis, the study team at ICF will utilize data from the Army, linked with wage data from the National Directory of New Hires, which will require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Department Of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Department of Defense (United States Military Academy, West Point). The MOU remains under review, but upon its execution, the analysis will be undertaken and completed within one year of receipt of the wage data from HHS.

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

This study will be piloted in two sites to test the use of texts and/or emails as a way 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 will also test the use of a financial incentive to connect with the AJCs. The intervention and data collection processes are under development.

There is a veteran-related topic in the Clearinghouse for Labor and Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) currently being developed, with information anticipated for posting to the CLEAR website by mid-2018.