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Veterans' Program and DVOP/LVER Grant
(Program Name)

Purpose:

The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) awards DVOP/LVER Grant funds to the State of Florida, AWI, on a Federal Fiscal Year (FY) basis to support the funding of DVOP/LVER staff and associated support expenses. DVOP and LVER staff, assigned to the State's one-stop career center delivery system, is tasked to provide workforce services to veterans, especially veterans with barriers to employment, and employers on behalf of veterans. In FY 2002, AWI was awarded approximately \$7.6 million to support about 80 DVOP and 53 LVER staff statewide. AWI recently applied for approximately \$11.3 million in FY 2003 DVOP/LVER Grant funding to support an estimated 140 DVOP and 72 LVER staff.

AWI's Veterans' Program involves the provision of priority workforce services to veteran customers in the one-stop career centers around the State. These services include, but are not limited to, job referral, job development, referral to training and supportive services, case management, labor market information, résumé assistance, employability skills workshops, etc.

LVER staff are primarily responsible for the functional oversight of the local one-stop career center Veterans' Program, ensuring that mandated priority services for veterans are provided by all staff in the one-stop career center. DVOP staff are responsible for providing workforce services to veterans with barriers to employment, e.g., disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, homeless veterans, etc., and for conducting outreach to veterans, especially veterans with barriers to employment.

LVER and DVOP staff are considered part of the one-stop career center team and promote all one-stop services, especially services in the employer marketing arena, e.g., employer visits, employer job fairs, etc. Veterans' Program services are fully integrated into the one-stop system and this integration benefits veterans.

In addition, the AWI Veterans' Program includes the following ancillary services:

1. Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which provides employability skills training and other benefits information to military members and their spouses in their transition from military to civilian society; and
2. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E), an employment and training program facilitated by DVOP staff to assist disabled veterans who are being trained/retrained and rehabilitated for new careers by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs.

3. Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI), sponsored Veterans' Roundtables are conducted quarterly bringing together state-level and local workforce management staff responsible for the delivery of workforce services for veterans. Roundtable discussion agendas focus on new programmatic developments, effective coordination in planning for new strategies and initiatives, resolving any potential conflicts/barriers and total integration of DVOP/LVER staff within the one-stop career center delivery system. See enclosed Veterans' Roundtable Summary Report.

See AWI Veterans' Program Web Page (www.floridajobs.org/pdg/vets).

Highlights/ Accomplishments:

In Program Year (PY) 2001 (July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002), 107,714 veterans registered in Florida's one-stop career center delivery system. Of these, 32,722 veterans entered employment; 5,380 disabled veterans entered employment.

In addition, Florida met all of the mandated Veterans' Services Performance Standards compliance indicators for PY 2001.

Challenges/ Barriers:

The drafters of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) placed a premium on the seamless approach to customer service in the one-stop career center delivery system. They also mandated that DVOP and LVER are required core services in the one-stop career center system. The WIA mandate must be reconciled with the DVOP/LVER Grant which states that DVOP/LVER staff should not be located in areas or situations where non-veterans congregate. Unless the two mandates are reconciled, DVOP and LVER staff could be excluded from participation in the following one-stop activities that directly benefit Veterans' Program customers:

- Career Resource Centers with a mix of veterans and non-veterans.
- One-Stop Orientations: This is the real entrance to all one-stop career center and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services. DVOP/LVER staff could be prohibited from participating and serving veteran customers because some non-veterans may also be in attendance.
- Job Fairs: DVOP/LVER staff would be required to ask the job seeker if they are a veteran before answering any of their questions or providing them with needed information.
- Employability Skills Workshops: Again, DVOP/LVER staff could be excluded from this very important service if there are non-veterans in attendance.

· Satellite One-Stops: Because of the very small staff contingent at these locations, DVOP staff outstationed at these centers would be susceptible to unintentionally interacting with non-veterans.

Under the current DVOP/LVER Grant, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) prohibits any DVOP/LVER service interaction with non-veterans. This policy, which is tantamount to keeping DVOP/LVER staff hermedically sealed in a vacuum within the one-stop environment, is really impossible to implement and is contrary to the service delivery team approach in Florida's one-stop career centers.

The mandated prohibition against DVOP/LVER participation in the above workforce services is a major obstacle to the effective integration and seamless participation of DVOP/LVER staff within Florida's one-stop delivery system. Together, AWI and VETS must confront and resolve this important issue.

Future Goals/ Strategies:

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) has approved the following new Veterans' Performance Goals for PY 2002:

Veteran Job Seeker Entered Employment Rate (VJSEER)

Veterans and Eligible Persons	62%
Disabled Veterans	60%

Veteran Job Seeker Employment Retention Rate at Six Months (VJSERR)

Veterans and Eligible Persons	77%
Disabled Veterans	75%

Veteran Job Seeker Entered Employment Rate Following Receipt of Staff Assisted Services (VERS)

Veterans and Eligible Persons	59%
Disabled Veterans	57%

VJSEER and VERS data for the first quarter of PY 2002 (July 1 through September 30) will be produced by the Florida Education and Training Performance Improvement Program (FETPIP) on September 12, 2003. VJSERR data for the same quarter will be produced by FETPIP on November 28, 2003. The above data for subsequent quarters will be reflected at three-month intervals.

Florida will be "held harmless" by VETS for these new Performance Goals in PY 2002 with the implementation of the new goals actually deferred until the following PY.

In addition, AWI may submit a grant modification/waiver to VETS requesting authorization to utilize the Other Personal Services (OPS) option in the employment of additional, above the threshold of available State career-service Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) DVOP positions. Career-service FTE positions are no longer a viable and reliable option to support additional DVOP staffing resulting from an increase in DVOP funding from VETS. In FY 2001 and FY 2002, approximately \$1.5 in DVOP/LVER Grant funds were recaptured or de-obligated due to an inability secure additional State career-service FTE positions. Other employment options may also be pursued in the future.