



Testimony before the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

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Oregon's Veterans

306,723 veterans currently reside in Oregon, and unlike many states, Oregon does not have active military bases (with the exception of two small Coast Guard units). Military bases typically provide veterans with employment transitional services and services aimed at removing barriers to employment such as medical and mental health services, work equipment and transportation services. Because Oregon doesn't have large active military bases, The Oregon Employment Department's Veterans Program fills in this gap in services by providing resources to help veterans overcome barriers to employment. The Oregon Employment Department and WorkSource Oregon Centers ensure that veterans receive priority in all employment services, workshops and training opportunities we offer.

Overview of the Veterans Program

The Oregon Employment Department's Veterans Program is funded through the Department of Labor – Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) Jobs for Veterans State Grant. The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) is awarded to all 50 state workforce agencies throughout the nation. The Employment Department's Veterans Program employs two types of Veterans Representatives: Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs). There are currently 24 Veterans Representatives working throughout the state.

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists are located in many WorkSource offices around the state. They provide one-on-one intensive employment services, which may include case management, to disabled veterans and veterans with barriers to employment, such as veteran ex-offenders, homeless veterans, and veterans who have been out of work for a significant amount of time. The DVOPs' time is spent focusing on veteran outreach, developing veteran service networks, and enhancing the employment prospects for disabled veterans and veterans with other barriers to employment.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives build relationships with employers in order to learn about employment opportunities for veterans. LVERs also promote the hiring of veterans to employers, and assist with veterans' hiring events, workshops, and networking events.



Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives are Specially Trained to Provide Employer and Referral Services to Veterans

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives have both the skill set and experience to provide specialized employment services to veterans:

- They are veterans themselves, so they have the resources to not only navigate the job search network, but to also connect with veteran clients and their shared experiences.
- They are specially trained through the National Veterans Training Institute, and have completed case management courses, community engagement and outreach classes, and employer outreach courses.
- They have the skill set and experience to assist with the military to civilian transition by assisting veterans with:
 - Translating military skills to civilian skills;
 - Resume assistance;
 - Job referrals;
 - Referrals to local service providers;
 - Employer contacts, apprenticeship and federal contractor employment information.

Together, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives provide outreach to locate eligible veterans in need of assistance, provide employment based workshops in the field, and foster relationships with Veterans Administration-organizations such as:

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

- The Veterans Affairs’ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Veterans Coordinator
- The Veterans Affairs’ Women Veterans Coordinator
- Veterans Services and Benefits Officers

Transitional Housing and Housing Voucher Providers

- Salvation Army
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Transition Projects
- Easter Seals

Ex-offender Re-entry Programs

- Washington County Restitution Center
- Tillamook County and Columbia County re-entry centers

Local Community Colleges and Universities

- Chemeketa Community College
- Oregon State University

Mental Health and Medical benefits

Providers

- Local Veterans Centers
- County Veterans Services officers

Employers

- Nike
- Oregon Health and Sciences University
- Reddaway Trucking



The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) focuses on ensuring that veterans have access to disability benefits, provides information about educational opportunities for veterans and information on how to apply for Veterans Affairs (VA) home loans, among many other services. The Oregon Employment Department's Veterans program works closely with the ODVA and routinely refers veteran clients that need to apply for disability benefits, and need information about VA educational benefits to ODVA Veterans Service Officers.

Veterans Program Success Stories

Reddaway Trucking:

A veteran by the name of Loren Holm met with Estanislado Quinones, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist in the Tualatin WorkSource Center. Estanislado assisted Loren with formulating an individual employment plan, worked with him to reformat his resume, and helped him obtain a position as a Regional Recruiter with Reddaway Trucking. Loren was so impressed with the level of service that he convinced Reddaway Trucking to sponsor a veterans networking event in Salem, OR on April 7, 2016. Loren has also fostered excellent working relationships with the DVOPs in La Grande, Medford, Eugene, Tualatin, Beaverton, and Oregon City, resulting in 26 employment referrals and eight hires of veteran clients.

Salem Networking Event:

On April 7, 2016, the Oregon Employment Department partnered with DOL-VETS, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), and the Society for Human Resource Management to conduct a veteran and service member networking event and employment workshop.

Local Veterans Employment representatives established relationships with employers such as the Oregon Health and Sciences University and Garmin, and taught workshops on translating military to civilian language, understanding military culture, and how best to attract veteran talent prior to the event. Staff also learned about each employer's job openings and what they were looking for in an ideal candidate.

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program staff and ESGR members provided resume and interview guidance to the veteran and service member attendees so they were prepared for the networking event. Attendees had the opportunity to meet face to face with employers and learn about their organizations, and employers had the opportunity to interview candidates that were not only prepared, but serious about looking for employment. The event illustrates how we can pull together our resources to ensure that veterans and service members can find long term, living wage employment. Thirteen employers and twenty-one job seekers participated in the event; two attendees were hired on the spot. 100% of employers and job seekers stated that the event met or exceeded their expectations, and 95% stated that they were likely to attend again.



Veteran’s Program Performance and Recent Program Activity

For Program Year 2015, which runs July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, the Veterans Program:

- Provided employment services to **19,165** veteran customers.
- Helped **5,700** veterans find employment.
- Provided intensive employment services to **4,038** disabled veterans and veterans with barriers to employment.

Intensive Services Rate: The Employment Department tracks and reports intensive services rates to DOL-VETS, which include providing one-on-one career counseling to a veteran client, developing an individual employment plan, and providing assistance with the removal of employment barriers. Currently, the Veterans Program provides intensive services to **98%** of eligible clients, exceeding the performance metrics required by DOL-VETs. Oregon’s Veterans Program is currently **#1** for intensive services for our region and **#4** in the nation.

We are meeting or exceeding almost all of our performance goals Statewide:

Performance Targets for Jobs for Veterans State Grant Funded Staff		
Source DOL-VETS 200A DVOP Report	PY 16	PY16 Oregon Goals
Veterans Entered Employment Rate	57%	54%
Veterans Entered Retention Rate	80%	80%
Veterans Average Earnings (6 months)	\$15,225	\$15,500
Disabled Veterans Entered Employment Rate	45%	46%
Disabled Veterans Entered Retention Rate	81%	78%
Disabled Veterans Average Earnings (6 months)	\$16,209	\$15,500

Veterans Demographics Statewide (2015)

Source: US Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor and Industries	
Veterans Population	306,723
Unemployment Rate 2016	6.3%
Unemployment Rate 2015	7.1%
Homeless Veterans	13,176
Median Income in the Past 12 Months	
Male	\$34,771
Female	\$27,249
Civilian population 18 years and over living in poverty	
With any disability	98,445
Without a disability	203,466

Educational Attainment (25 and older)	
Less than High School	17,144
High School Graduate or GED	77,264
Some College or Associates Degree	126,382
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	82,892
Poverty Status in the last 12 Months	
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level	25,238
Income in the past 12 months at or above poverty level	276,673

Contact Information:

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