

# FLORIDA'S STATE VETERANS' PROGRAM PLAN OF SERVICE NARRATIVE

## A. Projected Employment outlook for veterans

### Population

Florida has the third largest population of veterans in the nation with more than 1.5 million veterans, of which, wartime veterans make up nearly 74% (1.12 million). The largest wartime category is Vietnam-era veterans with 490,589 followed by Gulf War-era with 431,062 veterans who claim Florida as their home.<sup>1</sup> Florida also has the third largest population of veterans with a service connected disability in the country with 288,119.<sup>2</sup>

### Employment Outcomes for Veterans

Florida employment trends have a significant impact on the available job opportunities for veterans and will impact the scope of services that the veterans' program staff will be able to deliver. The following information is the current Labor Market Information for Florida.

### Florida Unemployment Rates for Veterans – 2013 Annual Averages (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

The 2013 annual average unemployment rate for veterans in Florida was one percentage point lower than the rate for nonveterans.

- Veterans (6.1 percent)
- Nonveterans (7.1 percent)

The unemployment rate for veterans in Florida was 0.5 percentage point lower than the national unemployment rate for this group (6.6 percent).

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

In June 2014, Walton County had the state's lowest unemployment rate (3.4 percent), followed by Monroe County (3.5 percent), Okaloosa County (4.6 percent), Sumter County (4.8 percent), and Wakulla County (4.9 percent). Many of the counties with the lowest unemployment rates were those with relatively high proportions of government employment. Hendry County had the highest unemployment rate (10.6 percent) in Florida in June 2014, followed by Flagler County (8.8 percent); Hamilton County (8.6 percent); and Madison and Putnam counties (8.2 percent each). There was one county with a double-digit unemployment rate for June, and none in May.

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### Florida's Nonagricultural Employment by Industry (Seasonally Adjusted)

The number of jobs in Florida was 7,800,000 in June 2014, up 237,500 jobs compared to a year ago. June 2014 was the 47th consecutive month with positive annual job growth after the state lost jobs for over three years. The industry gaining the most jobs was trade, transportation, and utilities (+52,500 jobs, +3.3 percent).

Other industries gaining jobs included professional and business services (+45,300 jobs, +4.1 percent); construction (+41,700 jobs, +11.5 percent); leisure and hospitality (+39,500 jobs, +3.8 percent); private education and health services (+34,100 jobs, +3.0 percent); financial activities (+10,300 jobs, +2.0 percent); other services (+5,500 jobs, +1.8 percent); manufacturing (+5,200 jobs, +1.6 percent); government (+1,900 jobs, +0.2 percent); and information (+1,300 jobs, +1.0 percent).

These industry job gains were partially due to increases in food and beverage stores; services to buildings and dwellings; specialty trade contractors; food services and drinking places; ambulatory health care services; insurance carriers and related activities; membership associations and organizations; fabricated metal product manufacturing; local government; and telecommunications.

### Area Nonagricultural Employment (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Of the 22 metro areas in the state, 20 had over-the-year job gains in June 2014. The areas with the largest gains were Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford (+39,100 jobs, +3.7 percent), Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall (+29,600 jobs, +2.8 percent), and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater (+25,300 jobs, +2.2 percent).

The two metro areas that lost jobs over the year were Ocala (-700 jobs, -0.8 percent) and Sebastian-Vero Beach (-100 jobs, -0.2 percent).

### Fastest Growing Occupations

The fastest growing occupations in the State include home health aides, personal and home care aides, cement masons and concrete finishers, veterinary technologists and technicians, diagnostic medical sonographers, cost estimators, etc., to name just a few.

### Projected Job Driven Opportunities

Florida job postings compiled by The Conference Board's Help Wanted Online data series totaled 263,855 openings (seasonally adjusted) in June 2014. June job demand represented an increase of 5,019

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openings (+1.9 percent) over the year from the 258,836 openings in June 2013. Job postings in Florida increased over the month compared to May 2014 by 9,733 openings (+4.8 percent). Nationally, demand increased by 97,847 openings (+2.0 percent) over the year and increased by 155,943 job openings (+3.2 percent) in June compared to the previous month.

Florida's labor demand, measured by online advertised vacancies, bottomed out in April 2009 at 152,784 ads and has increased by 111,071 openings (+72.7 percent) since then.

Major occupational groups with the most online ads in June were sales and related occupations; office and administrative support occupations; healthcare practitioners and technical occupations; and management occupations. (Source: The Conference Board, Help Wanted Online, prepared by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics.)

Florida will promote hiring and retention for veterans. Some examples of initiatives include:

- Conducting Veteran Specific Hiring Fairs vice Job Fairs. Making sure that each employer has open jobs and are ready to hire
- Including Interviewing Areas at these Hiring Fairs to allow and encourage On-Site interviews of participants
- State and Business joint cooperation ventures like "Paycheck 4 Patriots" an annual event to promote statewide hiring, with events occurring on the same day in different regions.

### Initial Claims

Reemployment (RA) claims in Florida have continued to trend down as the economy has improved. Florida had 58,774 initial claims for RA in June 2014. This was a decrease of 4.7 percent from the previous year. Claims were 80.9 percent above the low of 32,489 in February 2006.

### **A. Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment(SBE)**

Florida has identified more than 35,000 veterans who may qualify as having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE). The numbers and barriers vary throughout the SWA. Florida's DEO will continue to emphasize and train the local CareerSource staff to identify those who are already in the system seeking services, those entering the CareerSource Center, and serving those found by the Disabled

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Veterans Outreach Specialist (DVOP) out-reaching to those locations that are consistent with these target populations. Additionally, the State of Florida will continue to reinforce the roles and responsibilities of the DVOP as defined in VPL 03-14 and 04-14. The procedures established within the CareerSource Centers throughout the state include assessing individuals either at the front desk or by CareerSource customer service staff to ensure that only those individuals who have SBEs are referred to the DVOP. These targeted populations include:

- Special disabled or disabled veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211(1) and (3)
- Homeless veterans and those veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless;
- A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C 4211(6), who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
- An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
- Lacking a High School Diploma or Equivalent;
- Low Income veterans (as defined by WIAS at Sec. 101(25)(B)): or
- 18 to 24 year old veterans (as directed by the ASVET, VPL 04-14)

Native American veterans residing in the community or on Native American reservations will be served through the local CareerSource Centers in the same manner as other veterans, i.e. identifying those eligible for services by a DVOP or other CareerSource staff. (Note – upon request of the tribe, Hiring Fairs and other support services are provided).

By targeting the SBE population the DVOP specialists will serve a narrower group of veterans and eligible spouses which will enable them to provide intensive services to those most in need and provide referrals to high demand occupations which will help further reduce those barriers. DVOPs will provide services that reduce barriers through case management and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor as found in VPL 03-14 or the most recent policy.

DVOPs will also utilize their community partners such as VET Counseling Centers, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) sites, Continuum of Care partners in the community, and On-Site Visits to help identify Veterans with SBEs.

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The CareerSource staff will use a needs-based approach to identify veterans with special needs, i.e. significant barriers to employment and refer those veterans to the appropriate staff and/or services. All veterans and eligible persons who are pursuing employment will be registered in the State's (DEO) Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM) system. Veterans identified as having a significant barrier to employment will be provided with the necessary assessment and the required documented intensive case management services. DEO's internet-based EFM registers all veteran participants and provides a complete menu of customer-focused on-line workforce services; reference Title 38, USC, Chapters 41 and 42, Section 4215.

The State has provided the 24 Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs) an intake form that may be adapted to control the flow of veterans entering the CareerSource Center. Following this intake form will help ensure that veterans with SBE's are only seen by the DVOP and that other veterans receive services from the appropriate frontline staff. CareerSource partners and service providers will be trained to identify veterans that may have an SBE and in most instances, referred to the DVOP staff for further assessment, services and intensive case management as required.

An assessment should be completed prior to the development of a documented individual employment plan (IEP). Following the assessment, other core services such as labor market information and job referral/development will be part of the employment plan when appropriate, if not, already completed by partner staff.

Emphasis during Case Management will be placed on determining appropriate training for high demand occupations specific to each region, and formulating training plans that will help direct the veteran towards achieving success in pursuing these careers. The goal of the assessment, IEP and intensive services (IS) is to reduce the veteran's barriers so that they may achieve sustainable long term employment.

Interested/eligible veterans will be screened for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligibility, enrolled in WIA training and other services as required and when funding permits. When SBEs are identified through an assessment, those Veterans will be case managed by DVOP specialists and WIA specialists.

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Florida follows a National Mandate that services to veterans are considered a total CareerSource responsibility and not just the domain of the DVOP staff. *It should be noted* DVOP staff are assigned to supplement, not supplant, the duties of the CareerSource staff to provide priority of services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses in all programs funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL).

DVOP specialists will contact veterans in Homeless Shelters, Correctional Centers, Work-Release Programs, VA VR&E Centers, VA Medical/Outpatient Clinic Centers, Vet Centers, etc. to ensure they receive the workforce services necessary and identify those veterans with SBE's in need of intensive services.

DVOP staff, as well as other CareerSource staff will continue to support and participate in Veterans Stand Downs. Florida has a good tradition in this arena averaging nine Stand Down Awards annually.

DVOPs will provide outreach to incarcerated veterans, especially those about to be released or who have been released in the last year, and will continue to conduct them on a regular basis. DVOPs will also identify those with SBE's and ensure they receive intensive case management and other workforce services necessary to return to society and stable employment.

To ensure priority of service is observed, eligible veterans and covered persons are identified at the *point of entry* and shall be notified of programs and/or services available as stated in 20 CFR part 1010. Point of entry includes physical locations, such as CareerSource Career Centers, as well as web sites and other virtual service delivery resources.

Priority services will continue to be provided to disabled veterans and recently separated veterans to ensure and emphasize that they achieve enhanced outcomes, especially for performance items that are below the Wagner-Peyser standards.

The State will continue to monitor and track performance through the use of: Quarterly Manager's Reports, LERS reports, Technical Assist Visits, and Training provided by State Staff and the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI). The ETA/LERS report is a source to monitor performance goals for the DVOP and LVER programs.

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ETA9002/VETS200 Report performance indicators include:

- Received Staff Assisted Services;
- Received Career Guidance;
- Received Intensive Services;
- Referred to Federal Training;
- Received Job Search Activities;
- Referred to Employment;
- Referred to Federal Job;
- Referred to Federal Contractor Job;
- Entered Employment Following Intensive Services;
- Entered Employment Following Staff Assisted Services by DVOP;
- Average Earnings;
- Federal Training Placements;
- Entered into Federal Job;
- Entered into Federal Contractor Job;
- 9002F Priority of Service

The State recently redesigned the Quarterly Manager's report, as required by VPL 01-10 or the most current guidance available, which will help RWB management staff with program oversight responsibility collect and analyze "real-time" data that will highlight their DVOPs and LVERs performance directly related to VPL 03-14 and VPL 04-14.

Due to the unique design of Florida's workforce delivery system which includes the Department of Economic Opportunity, CareerSource Florida, and the 24 Regional Workforce Boards, a monitoring team has been established within the state veterans' program to help monitor data and performance using the Quarterly Manager's Report and ETA9002A/VETS200. This team will look for trends and ensure the DVOP and LVERs are providing services as required by 03-14 and 04-14.

### **C. Planned Deployment of Grant Funded Staff**

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Florida's workforce system is a true sub-state structure with the 24 Regional Workforce Boards (RWB) empowered to locally govern and manage all workforce services and programs in a customer-focused, performance-driven direction. Services to veterans are included in this management organization and structure. All Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) positions are state merit-based staff whose salary and benefit costs are paid directly by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), with direct day-to-day supervision by the RWB.

Each RWB's allocation of DVOP/LVER staff positions are based on the workload for the specific region which in turn helps us to define the correct number of DVOP/LVER staff that best meet the geographic needs of the local community.

The six dedicated VA VR&E positions have been moved to direct supervision by the State Veterans Program Coordinator which will help improve training and performance. These dedicated, specially trained Intensive Service Coordinators (ISC) handle an average of 1,000 Job Ready participants per year. The three dedicated Transitioning Incarcerated Veterans' Program (TVIP) staff are specially trained to deal with incarcerated or newly released veterans and are located in those regions that have the largest population of incarcerated or recently released veterans.

DVOP/LVER Hiring: State's procedures ensure, to the maximum extent possible, a thorough and complete search is made to locate and hire qualified veterans for DVOP and LVER positions, and that State Workforce Agencies' hiring preference policies for DVOPs and LVERs reflect the required order of priority as indicated in Title 38. The state also requires each position as soon as possible or within a maximum of sixty days. For those positions that go unfilled past sixty days, there will be a de-obligation between the State and the RWB to allow reallocation of funds to support unfunded positions noted on the 501 report and to ensure provision of services remain continuous.

DVOP vacancies will be filled using the following order of priority:

1. Special Disabled Veterans;
2. Other Disabled Veterans; and if no such eligible veteran is available, then to
3. Qualified Eligible Veterans.



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The State will take every course of action to fill positions as quickly as possible and that any funding caused by significant lapses will be reported on the quarterly financial reports. Additionally, every effort will be made to recruit and retain positions by encouraging RWB's to institute competitive salaries.

DVOP and LVER staff must satisfactorily complete specialized training provided by National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) during the 18 month period that begins on the date upon which the employee is assigned or moves to a new position. The specialized training courses required for DVOP specialist are Facilitating Veterans Employment (FVE) and Intensive Services (IS), while the specialized training for LVER's are Facilitating Veterans Employment (FVE) and Employer Outreach (EO).

### **D. DVOP Specialists**

The duties of the DVOP Specialist are reflected in Title 38, USC, Chapter 41, Section 4103(c), 20 CFR, VPL 07-10, VPL 03-14, VPL 04-14, Special Grant Provisions to the JVSG and State Plan of Service.

DVOP staff will provide a wide range of workforce services to those veterans in targeted populations with Significant Barriers to Employment. These include, but may not be limited to:

- Special disabled or disabled veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211(1) and (3)
- Homeless veterans and those veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless;
- A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C 4211(6), who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
- An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
- Lacking a High School Diploma or Equivalent;
- Low Income veterans (as defined by WIAS at Sec. 101(25)(B)); or
- 18 to 24 year old veterans (as directed by the ASVET)

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DVOP staff will facilitate services through a case management approach to veterans with SBE's, economically or educationally disadvantaged and with special workforce needs. These services include, but are not limited to the following:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs;
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals;
- Group counseling;
- Individual counseling and career planning;
- Short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communications skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Referral of veterans to job-focused and outcome-driven training, certification, etc.
- Job development services;
- Development of VA funded Special Employer Incentive and On-The-Job training slots for VA VR&E participants;
- Referral of veterans to employment opportunities;
- Conducting outreach to locate veterans for intensive services and market services for veterans in VA VR&E, HVRP, WIA, etc.;

The following outreach activities will be conducted by DVOP specialists who will continue to contact veterans in Homeless Shelters, Correctional Centers, Work-Release Programs, VA VR&E Centers, VA Medical/Outpatient Clinic Centers, Vet Centers, etc. to ensure that they receive the workforce services necessary to identify those veterans with SBE's in need of intensive services to reduce barriers and find and maintain meaningful and sustained employment in those jobs that are in high demand occupations.

### **State's strategy for integrating DVOP specialists into the workforce system to provide intensive services and the veterans they will serve**

DVOP staff will provide intensive services to veterans participating in WIA Programs, as required under Section 134 (d) (3) of the WIA. Veterans who are enrolled in or participating in other CareerSource

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programs, i.e. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Welfare-To-Work (WTW), etc., may be directed to DVOP staff for services, including assessment and intensive case management services. DVOP staff will coordinate with other CareerSource caseworkers involved in the provision of services to these veterans. The case worker "team approach" to service-delivery will be implemented when possible.

Upon their initial entry into the CareerSource Career Center, veterans with barriers to employment will be identified using the needs-based approach and/or assessment by the first available employment service staff member. CareerSource partners and service providers will be trained to identify veterans with significant barriers to employment or who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. In most instances, veterans identified with significant barriers will be referred to the DVOP staff for further assessment, services and intensive case management as required.

The RWB will utilize a State provided assessment tool (adapted for their region) to control the flow of veterans entering the CareerSource Center. Following this assessment tool will help ensure veterans with SBE's are seen by a DVOP and that other veterans receive services from the appropriate frontline staff.

Outreach to incarcerated veterans, especially those about to be released, will continue to be conducted on a regular basis, ensuring they receive the intensive case management and other workforce services necessary to return to society and stable employment.

### **VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VA VR&E) Program**

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DEO, VA, DOL VETS and the RWBs, the six assigned Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) serves as the State Agency's central point of contact for services to VA VR&E participants.

The specific duties of the out stationed Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) positions include, but are not limited, to the following:

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1. Facilitate and coordinate through the CareerSource Career Center Director the delivery of placement-related services with DVOPs assigned as placement specialists for VA VR&E Vocational Rehabilitation veteran clients at the local CareerSource Career Center.
2. Facilitate and provide services to VA VR&E-referred, special disabled veterans participating in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Chapter 31, Title 38 USC) according to the established priority for the provision of services. These will include on-the-job-training (OJT) development, non-paid work experience, selective job placement, follow-up services, provision of job-seeking skills training, job analysis, labor market information, etc. The ISC will participate with VA VR&E staff and veterans in early planning related to job placement and OJT development.
3. Where appropriate, in coordination with the VA VR&E employment specialist, facilitate and provide selective job development and placement, using listings of DVA-approved apprenticeship and OJT program employers.
4. Participate in each VA VR&E program orientation and all staffing. Especially important are staffing where consideration should be given to local labor market information.
5. Provide assistance to the local DVOPs in accordance with VA VR&E rehabilitation plans, immediately informing the VA VR&E case manager of any difficulties regarding efforts to assist the Chapter 31 veteran with obtaining suitable employment in the identified occupational field.
6. Provide detailed, accurate, and complete progress notes on the veterans' case management screen as they are received from the DVOP case manager, providing hard copy or emailed progress notes to the VA VR&E case manager monthly or more often, if needed. Provide input into rehabilitation or closure reports.
7. Provide status reports to the DVET as required by VPL 01-09 or most current guidance. Solicit and provide success stories to all concerned.
8. ISC's will coordinate and communicate on a regular basis with the Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs) and CareerSource Career Centers regarding the delivery of the above services.

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9. ISC's Coordinators will be responsible for submitting quarterly reports to DEO State Veterans' Program Coordinator and the DVET regarding all VA VR&E activity.

Intensive Service Coordinators (ISC) are located at the following sites:

- VA VR&E Center  
1009 North 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Pensacola, FL 32501
  
- VA VR&E Center  
409 NE Race Track Road  
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547-2503
  
- VA VR&E Center  
7825 Baymeadows Road, Suite 20B  
Jacksonville, FL 32256-7557
  
- VA VR& E Center  
1000 Legion Place, Site 1500  
Orlando, FL 32803
  
- VA VR&E Center  
9500 Bay Pines Blvd., Suite 226  
St. Petersburg, FL 33744
  
- VA VR&E Center  
One East Broward Blvd., Suite 810  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301

The assignment of these Intensive Service Coordinator positions will continue to result in Special Disabled Veteran Chapter 31 participants entering quality careers through VA VR&E training and rehabilitation programs.

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### **Transitioning Incarcerated Veterans' Program (TIVP)**

Florida currently has three dedicated DVOP Specialists. The specific duties of this dedicated DVOP Specialist include, but are not limited, to the following services:

1. Facilitate and coordinate through the CareerSource Career Center Director the delivery of transition, placement-related and other workforce services for incarcerated veterans.
2. Facilitate and provide Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), when funded, and fidelity bonding services to transitioning incarcerated veterans which will enhance their employment opportunities.
3. Facilitate Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training and other services for transitioning incarcerated veterans.
4. Provide directly and facilitate directly Employability Skills Workshops for incarcerated veterans, which will include interviewing skills, resume assistance, job retention skills, job search skills, etc.
5. Provide directly and facilitate assessment, counseling, vocational guidance, pre-release and post release case management, and other services to transitioning incarcerated veterans.
6. Refer case management and other information on soon-to-be released incarcerated veterans to Florida's statewide network of DVOP staff.
7. DVOP Specialist will coordinate and communicate on a regular basis with the Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs) and CareerSource Career Centers regarding the delivery of the above services.
8. DVOP Specialists will be responsible for submitting quarterly reports to DEO State Veterans' Program Coordinator and the DVET regarding all TIVP activity.

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(TIVP) DVOP Specialist location:

- Florida Crown Workforce Center  
971 West Duval Street, Suite 10  
Lake City, Florida 32205  
(1 TIVP DVOP position)
- Marianna CareerSource Career Center  
4636 Hwy. 90 East, Suite E  
Marianna, FL 32446  
(1 TIVP DVOP position)
- Madison Employment Connections  
600 West Base Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Madison, FL 32340  
(1 TIVP DVOP position)

### **E. LVER Staff**

LVER staff will continue to be viable and effective partners in the CareerSource delivery system and key members of the Business Employment Service Team. They will help facilitate and participate in employer marketing services and employer job fairs and other business development activities. LVERs will also be involved in developing job orders, assisting employers at job fairs and facilitating employer recruitments activities within the CareerSource Center. All of these activities translate into positive benefits and productivity for the CareerSource Career Centers and result in the development of employment opportunities for veterans.

Duties assigned to the LVER position.

The LVER will only perform the duties outlined in 38 U.S.C. 4104(b) and VPL 03-14, which are related to outreach to the employer community and facilitation within the state's employment service delivery system. LVER's will be assigned duties that promote to employers, employer associations, and

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business groups the advantages of hiring veterans. When employer outreach is primarily accomplished by a "Business services team" the LVER will be included as an active member of that team.

Additional LVER activities and services include, but are not limited to, the following services:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs;
- Conducting employer outreach;
- In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups;
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and
- Coordination and participating with other business outreach efforts.
- Conduct Veterans' Program training for all CareerSource Associates;
- Advocacy role for veterans by contacting employers, unions, apprenticeship programs, Veterans/Community-Based Organizations, etc.;

LVER staff must satisfactorily complete specialized training provided by National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) during the 18 month period that begins on the date upon which the employee is assigned, moves to a new position. The specialized training courses required for LVERs are Facilitating Veterans Employment (FVE) and Employer Outreach (EO).

The LVER will provide quarterly Manager's Report on Services to Veterans to the RWB Executive Director, CareerSource Career Center Director, the DEO State Veterans' Program Coordinator and the State Director, VETS, within fifteen days after the end of the reporting quarter. In CareerSource Career Centers with no LVER, the RWB will delegate this responsibility to the appropriate staff; report will be submitted electronically. The State's Veterans' Technical Performance Report will include copies of the Manager's Report on Services to Veterans from each RWB.

### **F. Program Integration and Leveraging Resources**



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A detailed description of workforce service-delivery strategies for veterans, integration of DVOP/LVER staff in the CareerSource Career Centers, veterans' priority of services, etc., is also included in Florida's State Strategic Workforce Plan.

DVOP and LVER staff will continue to conduct their duties in accordance with the Roles and Responsibilities, to effectively promote the CareerSource Veterans' Program.

Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM) is the workforce system's comprehensive, on-line employment resource, on the web at [www.EmployFlorida.com](http://www.EmployFlorida.com). EFM connects employers to veteran jobseekers and provides everyone access to workforce tools, resources and local workforce experts. In addition, the Employ Florida Vets Portal (<http://veterans.employflorida.com/portals/veteran/>), a function of EFM is specifically tailored to the needs and interests of veterans. In an effort to compliment various National and State marketing campaigns, locally developed events such as Veterans Job Fairs, Veterans' Day Parades, Veterans/Military Appreciation Days, Employer Seminars, city/county proclamations advocating the employment of veterans, press releases, etc., are also strongly encouraged.

To better meet the needs of employers wishing to hire veterans, a coordinated approach to marketing and service delivery that includes CareerSource Career Center business representatives and LVER staff and other CareerSource Career Center staff will be maintained. Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development units, Veterans' Organizations and other workforce partners and stakeholders are also invited to play a key role in marketing this campaign.

Florida's workforce system will continue to utilize and partner with all economic stakeholders regarding the employment of veterans, i.e. Florida Council of 100, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development units, State and RWBs, CareerSource Operators, Unions, Human Resource Associations, Professional Organizations, educational institutions, training providers, etc.

Florida's CareerSource Career Center delivery system will be utilized as the ultimate conduit and linkage between the employer community and the veteran jobseeker.

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A state and local media and awareness campaign will be facilitated, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (regarding the employment of veterans and the correlating advantages to employers.)

Maintain partnerships with the following federal and state agencies, organizations and programs: USDOL Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA), Dept. of Defense (DOD) Family Support Centers, U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Small Business Administration (SBA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Postal Service, Veterans Service Organizations, County Veterans' Service Offices (CVSO), Florida Departments of Veterans Affairs (FDVA), Corrections and Education, Military Family Employment Advocacy Program, Volunteers of America – Florida, local homeless coalitions, faith-based organizations and other veterans advocacy groups.

Florida's CareerSource system will also continue to pursue aggressively those grants and resources that benefit the State's veterans, i.e. Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), Veterans' Stand Down funding and others.

### **G. Priority of Service**

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has issued regulations implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, as provided by the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA), and as specified by the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006. JVA calls for priority of service to be implemented by all "qualified job training programs," defined as "any workforce preparation, development or delivery program or service that is directly funded, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor." Since enactment of JVA in 2002, priority of service has been implemented under policy guidance issued by the Employment and Training Administration. The purpose of these regulations is to further articulate how priority of service is to be applied across all new and existing qualified job training programs.

### **Key Definitions**

*Covered person* – The regulations adopt and apply this statutory term, which includes *eligible spouses*.

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*Veteran* – The regulations specify that the definition for *veteran* specified at 38 U.S.C. 101(2) applies across all qualified job training programs for the purpose of priority of service.

That definition includes two key criteria:

- Service in the active military, naval, or air service; and,
- Discharge under conditions other than dishonorable.

Eligible veterans and covered persons identified at the *point of entry* shall be notified of programs and/or services available. Point of entry includes physical locations, such as CareerSource Career Centers, as well as web sites and other virtual service delivery resources.

All Regional Workforce Boards (RWB) and CareerSource Career Centers will ensure their two-year strategic plan provides clear strategies and policies for providing veterans and covered persons with the highest quality of service at every phase of services offered. Policies shall be implemented to ensure that eligible veterans and eligible spouses are aware of:

- Their entitlement to priority of service;
- The full array of programs and services available to them; and,
- Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.

Priority of service means the right of eligible veterans and covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under new or existing qualified job training programs, furthermore; the eligible veterans or covered persons shall receive access to the service or resources earlier in time than the non-covered person. If the service or resource is limited, the veteran or covered persons receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. Services can range from basic functions of the CareerSource System, such as assistance with job search and identification of needed skills, to more customized initiatives such as creating career pathways, with corresponding competency assessments and training opportunities.

To accommodate Priority of Service at point of entry, Geographic Solutions has implemented changes to the Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM) to accommodate changes in the Priority of Service to veterans. A “pop-up” targets newly registering veterans and covered persons. The purpose of this pop-up is to

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ensure newly registered veterans and covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of services and the types of services available under priority of service.

### **Monitoring Priority of service**

A veterans self-registration will automatically record service code 089, "Notification of Veterans Priority of Service". A manual service code 189 will be used when the "Notification of Veteran Priority of Service" is given as a staff-assisted service. Veterans and covered persons who register in EFM or who are being entered into EFM by staff will be advised of their entitlement to priority of services and the code 189 will be entered on the service plan screen in EFM. The 089 and 189 service plan codes will serve as a priority of service indicator in conjunction with periodic state, regional and local level program reviews to ensure compliance with priority of service. Additional monitoring guidance from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is forthcoming in accordance with 20 CFR Part 1010, Priority of Service for Covered Persons Final Rule.

Eligible veterans and covered persons will also receive priority in all U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) programs funded in whole or in part operating in the CareerSource Career Center.

Programs include but are not limited to:

- 1) WIA Adult;
- 2) WIA Dislocated Worker;
- 3) National Emergency Grants;
- 4) Wagner-Peyser State Grants;
- 5) Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA); and,
- 6) Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Additional programs may include:

- WIA Youth Program;
- Welfare to Work Program;
- Community-Based Job Funding Grants;
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program;
- Indian and Native American Program;
- H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants;

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- Office of Disability Employment Programs;
- Labor Market Information Formula Grants;
- Pilots and Demonstration Grants;
- Research and Development;
- Career CareerSource Electronic Tools; and
- Other Internet based tools operated by (USDOL) grantees.

Other examples of Priority of Services for Veterans' include the following:

- Referral of qualified veterans to new job openings, especially Federal Contractor job orders, prior to all non-veteran job referral activity; and
- Job Fairs for veterans, or having the first few hours be for veterans alone.

The State Veterans' Program Coordinator (SVPC) and Assistant SVPCs will continue to conduct regional veterans state-wide training workshops.

### **H. Performance Incentive Awards**

The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) will administer the Performance Incentive Award program. The total amount of funds designated for performance incentive awards is equivalent to 1 percent of the states total award amount. The incentive awards will be used to encourage the improvement of employment, training, and placement services for veterans and recognize workforce development partners for excellence or demonstrable improvements in the provision of services to veterans. The Performance Incentive Award program will create good competition among those service providers who provide workforce services to veterans. This will culminate in fostering a spirit of excellence and productivity regarding services to Florida's veterans, resulting in more veterans entering and retaining quality careers.

In accordance with Veterans' Program Letter 02-07, the awards will focus on service excellence and will encourage CareerSource Career Centers to strive to achieve superior performance in all areas of service delivery for veterans. The intent of Veterans' Performance Funds in Florida is to encourage the enhancement and improvement of employment, training, and placement services for veterans,

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recognizing CareerSource Career Centers for excellence in the provision of these services to veterans.

The awards system will encourage individual CareerSource excellence in two ways:

1. It will motivate all CareerSource Career Center staff to enhance and improve efforts to serve veterans and to track their success.
2. It will reinforce efforts to monitor quality in the delivery of workforce services to veterans as managers and other administrative staff will evaluate the delivery system through the awards nomination process.

Regional Workforce Boards will be asked to submit written nominations for CareerSource Offices located within their geographical responsibilities and include information that describes the objective and subjective criteria that the Board used to make the nomination. Overall, the nomination must demonstrate that a local office provided exemplary services to veterans that are beyond the requirement of the grant to serve veterans during the course of the program year (PY). The nomination/selection will be done during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the PY. Fiscal years' funds must be obligated/awarded prior to September 30. All RWBs will continue to be advised of the intended usage of the program's performance funds.

There will be a selection committee that reviews nominations. Awards will be determined based on the criteria established by the Veterans' Program work group that include participants from CareerSource Florida Inc. (WFI), selected Regional Workforce Board Directors, management staff from Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), State Veterans Programs Coordinator (SVPC) and the Assistant SVPCs.

Suggested Criteria to be used to evaluate CareerSource career centers include:

- Successful Veterans' Stand Downs;
- Placements of VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VA VR&E) Disabled Veterans (using current data);
- Enrollment of Veterans and/or Disabled Veterans into employment-focused training or certification programs (using current data);

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- Community involvement and outreach with Community Based Organizations (Veterans Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Units);
- Successful Job Fairs for Veterans;
- Developing "Best Practices" that enhance services to veterans;
- Employer marketing resulting in increased employment opportunities for veterans;
- Services to targeted veterans i.e. disabled veterans, older veterans, incarcerated veterans, homeless veterans, etc.
- Exceptional performance on any project that directly benefits veterans;
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVPR) Grant Awards; and
- Other activities locally created and developed by the RWBs

Only those nominations that meet the state's criteria will be eligible for an award.

In accordance with VPL 02-07 section V paragraph A, Incentive funds will be awarded in the form of a cash award to those offices whose have been selected for an award. Offices will be categorized into three size categories' (small, medium and large) there be only one cash award for each size category. The name of these awards will be: Small CareerSource Center, Medium CareerSource Center and Large CareerSource Center. The amount of the cash award will be equal across each office category with the total amount not to exceed 1% of the grant.

### **I. Narrative Budget Information**

All other non-personal services (NPS) "fair share" and direct costs associated with the local level CareerSource Career Center DVOP and LVER staffs, such as rent, utilities, phone, supplies, travel, etc., are paid by the RWBs. Funds are made available to the RWBs to cover these associated costs through a "Notice of Grant Award/Notice of Fund Availability (NFA)". Release authority for the funds is provided quarterly and cash draws are available to the RWBs weekly. These "pass-thru" funds are reported in Florida's Accounting Information Resource (FLAIR) system, the official state accounting system and the One Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). The advances are reported in FLAIR as a lump sum figure for DVOP and LVER in the object code 790010, titled "RWB Pass Through Formula and/or Operating Allocations" within Category 100780, titled "Grant/Aid Workforce Services". These costs are reflected in Budget Information Summery form 401. Expenditures are reported by

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Regional Workforce Boards in the One Stop Management Information System by cost category. These cash advances and expenditures are monitored regularly.

It should be noted that as other programs (in particular Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser programs) lose funding, the Veterans programs continue to have to incur a larger portion of "shared" costs. The State will comply with VPL 05-05 or most current version issued by DOL VETS and 2 CFR. According to 2 CFR, Subtitle A, Chapter II, part 225, formerly referred to as OMB 2CRF Part 225, costs are allocable based on relative benefits received, and any cost allocable to a particular Federal award under the principles of 2 CFR part 225 may not be charged to other Federal awards to overcome fund deficiencies, to avoid restrictions imposed by law or terms of the Federal awards, or for other reasons. Only state level costs of travel and supplies, which will appear in the FLAIR reports in those categories, are reflected in the travel and supplies budget categories in the standard federal forms.

### **Indirect costs differentiated within the grant**

Only indirect costs derived from the approved indirect cost rate, as negotiated by the cognizant agency's federal cost negotiator (USDOL), are reflected in the "Indirect Charges" line included on the federal budget forms. Enclosed with this grant application is a copy of the Florida DEO's most recent approved Indirect Cost Negotiation Agreement, dated December 10, 2013. The approved provisional indirect cost rate applicable to the DVOP, LVER, and TAP programs effective from 7/1/13 to 6/30/15 is 12.1174%, which is applied against total direct salaries and wages including all applicable fringe benefits.

### **Staff costs or activities not identified as being associated with DVOP or LVER activities that will be supported by State grant funds**

Included in the budgets are administrative costs associated with operating the DVOP and LVER programs in accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2CRF Part 225. This practice of charging appropriate administrative costs associated with the operation of the programs is consistent with the way other federal grants are administered. Administrative costs include not only costs derived through the indirect cost rate, but also direct and allocated charges associated with operation of the programs at the state and local levels. Administrative costs have been planned and reflected where they



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appear in the state's accounting system, i.e., in the appropriate categories to which the costs will be charged (salaries, benefits, and appropriate non-personal services costs).

Direct administrative costs at the state level are charged based on actual staff time spent working with the DVOP and LVER programs. Management and supervision costs at the state level are allocated to the grants based on direct staff charges. Management and supervision costs at the local level are allocated to the grants based on the number of DVOP and LVER staff in relation to the total number of staff in the RWBs. Management and supervision costs associated with these direct charged staffs will be cost allocated, as appropriate in accordance with 2CRF Part 225, and based on the way other federal grants are charged, as described in the indirect cost proposal included with this grant.

The regional veterans state-wide training workshops conducted by the State Veterans' Program Coordinator (SVPC) and Assistant SVPCs will be funded by the State level JVA grant funds.

Certain staff at the state office that work directly with the DVOP/LVER programs will charge time to the grants, in accordance with OMB 2CRF Part 225, resulting in the administrative costs. These staffs include the grant manager in Contracts and Grants (responsible for preparation of the grant application and any subsequent grant modifications, as well as the tracking of expenditures against plan), the grant accountant in Financial Management (responsible for preparation of quarterly financial reports and any necessary corrections to FLAIR reports in coordination with the grant manager), and the budget analyst in Budget Management (responsible for obtaining and tracking state budget authority for DVOP/LVER). These staff persons will charge their time based on actual time worked on the DVOP/LVER programs. Management and supervision costs associated with these direct charged staffs will be cost allocated, as appropriate, and in accordance with 2CRF Part 225 and the way other federal grants are charged. Other direct charged administrative costs, as appropriate, may occur occasionally, but only to the extent that they are applicable to the DVOP/LVER programs. A description of these cost allocated charges and any other cost pools that may be appropriate to the DVOP/LVER programs is also included in the grant application package, along with the indirect cost proposal submitted to USDOL describing same.

### **K. Hiring of LVER/DVOP staff**

#### **I. The State Veterans' Program Coordinator (SVPC) and Assistant SVPC**

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Florida will submit with this application a waiver to obtain approval from DOL/VETS for the continuation of one additional State Coordinator to provide functional supervision and training for the State's veterans' employment program. Florida has the fastest growing veteran population in the country and consistently ranks within the nation's top three for: disabled veterans population, total veterans population and veterans seeking employment. Florida continues to support twenty-four Regional Workforce Boards that encompasses nearly 100 full service CareerSource Career Centers throughout the state.

RWBs will be required to hire DVOP staff under merit system guidelines (per CFR 652.215). Advertising and filling DVOP vacancies will be filled using the following order of priority:

1. Special disabled veterans.
2. Other disabled veterans.
3. Other eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary taking into account applicable rates of unemployment and the employment emphases set forth in chapter 42 of this title.

RWBs will be required to hire LVER staff under merit system guidelines (per CFR 652.215). Advertising and filling LVER vacancies will be filled using the following order of priority:

1. Qualified service-connected disabled veterans.
2. If no veteran described in paragraph (1) is available, to qualified eligible veterans.
3. If no veteran described in paragraph (1) or (2) is available, then to qualified eligible persons.

The State will take every course of action to fill positions as quickly as possible and that any funding caused by significant lapses will be reported on the quarterly financial reports. Additionally, every effort will be made to recruit and retain positions by encouraging RWB's to institute competitive salaries.

DVOP and LVER positions may be reassigned to other RWBs and CareerSource Career Centers due to projections of veterans' population shifts based on information received from the Florida Department of

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Veterans' Affairs, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities, the return or demobilization of veterans, National Guard Members/Reservists, etc. The Director of Veterans Employment and Training Services (DVET) will be notified. Any reassignment of veterans' program staff will be conducted through a modification of the JVSG grant.

Florida supports a proactive, united-front, and well-coordinated seamless approach to serving the needs of returning veterans. Through continuously evolving and collaborative efforts with federal, state and local agencies, as well as, other veterans and military advocates, Florida's veterans and military members are swiftly identified and provided a variety of programs and services. This collaboration involves a sharing of information on returning veterans and injured/disabled veterans to ensure they receive the services they need and deserve. Additionally, each year a variety of short and long term initiatives, to support veterans' needs and promote Florida's Veterans Employment program, are developed and implemented by the 24 Regional Workforce Boards throughout the state.

Additionally, approximately one third of Florida's veterans seeking employment are disabled and may have an SBE, therefore they will be targeted for concentrated job development to fill employment opportunities, case management and other services as available. Examples of such veterans' populations include but are not limited to:

- Special disabled or disabled veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211(1) and (3)
- Homeless veterans and those veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless;
- A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C 4211(6), who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
- An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
- Lacking a High School Diploma or Equivalent;
- Low Income veterans (as defined by WIAS at Sec. 101(25)(B)): or
- 18 to 24 year old veterans (as directed by the ASVET)