

VETERANS' ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY REPORT

September 28, 2006

A Veterans' Roundtable was conducted at Workforce Florida, Inc., (WFI) in Tallahassee on September 28, 2006. Approximately 40 staff from the Regional Workforce Boards (RWB), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI), WFI and others were in attendance or participated via teleconference.

Veterans' Performance Measures/DVOP/LVER Grant-Based Measures

Mitch Collier discussed the recently negotiated State and Regional Workforce Board (RWB) level Veterans' Performance Measures. A communiqué was sent to the RWBs informing them of their respective performance goals for Veterans and Disabled Veterans for Program Year 2006; see attached. These performance measures/goals will be indicated in the quarterly ETA 9002D Report, reflecting Veterans'/Disabled Veterans' Entered Employment Rates (EER) and Employment Retention Rates (ERR). Performance accountability is a key component of Florida's workforce delivery system, encouraging innovation that shows continuous improvement in services to veterans and transitioning service members.

Sharing Veterans' Information – Florida Dept. of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (REALifelines)

Mitch Collier discussed the veterans' data sharing agreements with the FDVA and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). AWI recently entered into a partnership agreement with the FDVA regarding the sharing of contact information on veterans who are being served by each agency. Under this partnership, the FDVA provides information on veterans who have recently returned to Florida or are showing Florida as their home of record. AWI reciprocates by providing contact information to the FDVA on veterans who are registered in OSMIS. This coordinated and confidential sharing of information allows both agencies to enhance their outreach and communications to veterans who potentially need workforce services from Florida's workforce system or benefits information from the FDVA.

Veterans contact information provided by the FDVA to AWI is forwarded on a monthly basis to designated RWB staff for the dissemination to their DVOP/LVER staff, who then make the necessary outreach and follow-up to provide priority workforce services to these veterans.

In addition, AWI and VETS have established a partnership to identify and provide priority workforce services to disabled veterans, injured military members and families who are participating in the Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines

(REALifelines) Program. VETS receives information on returning injured veterans and their families through the REALifelines Program and is tasked with the responsibility for the initial contact and case management of REALifelines participants. After this is accomplished, VETS forwards a REALifelines participants' list to AWI. Subsequently, AWI then disseminates the list to the appropriate RWBs and DVOP/LVER representatives for case management and other services.

After receipt of information on REALifelines participants, DVOP and LVER staff make the necessary outreach and follow-up to provide priority workforce services to REALifelines participants. Under the REALifelines Program, DVOP and LVER staff are authorized to provide direct workforce services to military family members of disabled veterans/injured military members identified as REALifelines participants, identifying them as Eligible Persons in OSMIS.

Education/Workforce Credentialing for Veterans

Joe Mizereck, Program Coordinator, Ready to Work Certification Program, discussed education and workforce credentialing for Veterans. Education and training benefits are often the main reasons for joining the military. Many veterans are not aware of the choices and opportunities available to them in continuing their education after they leave the military. In addition to the funding assistance available to veterans through the Montgomery GI Bill, it is possible that one's military service has earned them college credit. Many schools and colleges (public and private) in Florida award veterans educational credit towards a degree based on their military training, coursework, and occupational specialty. AWI is in the process of developing a comprehensive listing of all the educational institutions in Florida that offer credit for military experience. This listing will be placed on the AWI Veterans' Program web site (www.floridajobs.org/PDG/veterans.html).

Expenditure of DVOP/LVER Grant Funds

Mike Switzer discussed the expenditure of DVOP/LVER Grant funds. The lapse of DVOP/LVER Grant funds by some of Florida's RWBs has resulted in a recapture of these funds by VETS, primarily due to the RWBs failure to fill vacant DVOP/LVER positions and not drawing down/reconciling DVOP/LVER funds timely. In addition, the delay in receiving DVOP/LVER Grant Awards and modification approvals from VETS has also contributed to a cumulative impact on under-expenditures since any new DVOP/LVER positions requested in the grant application/modification process could not be assigned or filled until official receipt of the DVOP/LVER Grant Award. A continuation of DVOP/LVER Grant fund recaptures could impact workforce services to Florida's veterans and also result in a decreased amount of future DVOP/LVER Grant Awards for Florida.

AWI is developing and will soon implement a Deobligation/Reallocation Policy to ensure that Florida's RWBs expend their respective allocated DVOP/LVER Grant funds in a timely manner. In addition, the Fiscal Year 2007 Veterans' Program Plan of Service also states that RWBs with DVOP and LVER vacancies that exceed sixty days will be subject

to a deobligation and reallocation of the funds that support these positions. It is imperative that Florida continue to receive increased DVOP/LVER Grant award funds in order to serve the many veterans who will need DVOP and LVER services and other One-Stop Career Center services.

Homeless Veterans' Programs – Update

Mike Switzer and Mitch Collier discussed Homeless Veterans' Programs in Florida. Volunteers of America - Florida (VOA-Florida) currently operates Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs (HVRP) in RWBs 8, 13, and 22. In Program Year 2006, HVRP grant funding was provided to VOA-Florida to provide transitional supportive services to homeless veterans in Regions 8 (\$200,000), 13 (\$125,000) and 22 (\$300,000). These regions have a partnership agreement with VOA-Florida to implement case management and other workforce services provided by DVOP/LVER staff. In addition, WFI/AWI also has a statewide partnership agreement with VOA-Florida to serve homeless veterans.

Florida's workforce system will continue to pursue grants and funds that benefit the State's veterans, i.e. HVRP, Veterans' Stand Down Reimbursement Awards, Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) Grants, Small Business Administration (SBA) Grant for veteran, disabled veteran business owners, etc.

Veterans' Virtual Job Fair

Mitch Collier discussed the proposed Veterans Virtual Job Fair in Florida. The New Mexico Department of Labor, in partnership with VETS, recently established a Veterans Virtual Job Fair targeting veteran and employer customers; see http://www.dol.state.nm.us/dol_newsfairVet.htm. This statewide Veterans Virtual Job Fair is conducted on-line and scheduled for a specific date and time. There is no charge to employers or veterans. The only requirement is that they register via the Veterans Virtual Job Fair site in order to participate. Job Fair fliers targeting veterans and employers are utilized to market and promote these on-line Job Fairs in advance of the event. The New Mexico Department of Labor and VETS share the funding for the operation of this program.

As a workforce development resource, the Veterans Virtual Job Fair increases veterans and employers participation in New Mexico's workforce system, providing employers with a unique and user-friendly recruitment tool to hire qualified veterans, while at the same time exposing veterans to great employment opportunities in real time. This system also ensures that increased numbers of veterans, especially recently separated and disabled veterans, are utilizing New Mexico's workforce delivery system (One-Stop Career Centers).

According to New Mexico Department of Labor staff involved in the Veterans Virtual Job Fair operation, the program has been extremely productive and beneficial to veterans and employers.

AWI, in partnership with WFI, VETS and Florida's RWBs, will pursue the development and implementation of a Florida's Veterans' Virtual Job Fair, utilizing already established Employ Florida Marketplace web-based platforms.

Miscellaneous

- Alonzo Galloway, DVOP, RWB 7, discussed Florida's recently operational Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program (IVTP). Under this program, 1 DVOP position was assigned to RWB 7 (Alonzo) and a half-time DVOP position was assigned to RWB 3; see attached Power Point.
- Mike Switzer recently announced his retirement, effective December 31, 2006. Mike, a Vietnam Army veteran, has been a real advocate for veterans in Florida and the main reason for the success of the Florida Veterans' Roundtables. All of us who serve Florida's veterans thank him for his service to our country and his very strong support for Florida's veterans. He will be missed.

The Veterans' Roundtable adjourned at 11:45 am.