

VETS Response to Draft Report

U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Veterans' Employment and Training
Washington, D.C. 20210



September 30, 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR: ELLIOT P. LEWIS
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

FROM: Raymond M. Jefferson *Raymond M. Jefferson*

SUBJECT: Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
Written Response to Audit of Homeless Veterans
Reintegration Program (HVRP) Draft Report No.
06-10-003-02-001

This memorandum is the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) response to the draft report on the audit of the VETS Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Draft Report No. 06-10-003-02-001

Finding - The breakdown in program oversight resulted in HVRP not meeting program goals.

VETS has reviewed the Draft OIG Report titled, "The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program Needs to Make Improvements to Ensure Homeless Veterans' Employment Needs are Met."

The VA reports an estimated 107,000 homeless Veterans on any given night. That figure has come down over the past few years from over 250,000 to about 103,000 to date. Most stakeholders will agree the HVRP has contributed significantly to the decline of homelessness among our Nation's Veterans.

VETS agrees that improved controls are needed for HVRP. To address this need, VETS will need to use measures that clearly depict performance such as number of participants that are placed into employment versus the entered employment measure which was created as criteria for measuring One Stop performance.

The report indicates that VETS policies require grantees to meet 85 percent of one or more of their performance goals. VETS agrees that this was not accomplished. Over the years, the HVRP program has rendered good performance results. It scored in the top 10 percent of programs in the Department in the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) created by OMB. Because of past performance, VETS has instituted stretch goals commensurate with past performance and not realistic under recent conditions.

The report states that VETS' oversight did not provide sufficient review of grant operations at both the GOTR and the regional office levels. VETS concurs that more needs to be done to improve oversight of grant operations. VETS has drafted new criteria to be used by Grant Officer Technical Representatives (GOTRs). This new criteria will be implemented in the coming FY 2011. The VETS Outcomes and Performance Accountability Reporting (VOPAR) system is now back online and should assist with management of the program.

VETS takes no official position that the downturn in the economy impacted the opportunities for more homeless Veterans to achieve employment. VETS also does not agree that significant breakdowns in VETS oversight was the cause for not meeting the goals. VETS does agree that the goals were not met and that oversight needs to be improved.

All in all, VETS does agree that improvements are needed in oversight and management at all levels and that performance can and needs to improve. VETS will address more realistic methods for goal-setting and measurement along with establishing a more rigorous and standardized tool for evaluating grantees. The effort has already begun and VETS intends to improve in these areas in the coming year.