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VETERANS' PROGRAM LETTER NO. 03-16

TO: ALL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE STAFF
ALL HOMELESS VETERANS' PROGRAM GRANT RECIPIENTS
ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY (SWA) ADMINISTRATORS
ALL REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ADMINISTRATION (INFO)

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SUBJECT: Enrollment of Homeless Veterans Program Participants into a Workforce
Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Workforce Program at an American Job
Center (AJC)

- I. **Purpose** To provide guidance and information on the requirement to have participants of the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service's (VETS) homeless veterans programs enroll in WIOA title I workforce programs available through AJCs.
- II. **References**
 - Title 38, United States Code, Sections 2021 et seq. and 4103A (38 U.S.C. 2021 et seq. and 4103A)
- III. **Background** The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) is authorized under 38 U.S.C. 2021, as added by Section 5 of Public Law 107-95, the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001. The purpose of the HVRP grant is to provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.

The Homeless Female Veterans and Veterans with Families Program (HFVWWF) is authorized under 38 U.S.C. 2021A, as added by Section 202(a) of Public Law 111-275, the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010. The purpose of grants funded under HFVWWF is to provide job training, counseling, placement services, and child care services to expedite the

reintegration of homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children into the labor force.

The Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) is authorized under 38 U.S.C. 2023, as added by Section 5 of Public Law 107-95. The purpose of the IVTP grant is likewise to provide referral and counseling services to assist veterans, who are at risk of homelessness as they transition from institutional living.

HVRP, HFVWWF, and IVTP (collectively, “homeless veterans programs”) are the primary programs through which VETS administers grant funding to support employment opportunities for homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness. The Department of Labor also serves veterans through WIOA title I programs, the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), and the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program. Through JVSG in particular, Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, authorized under 38 U.S.C. 4103A, provide intensive services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, including homeless veterans.

In late 2009, the White House and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced an ambitious goal to end veteran homelessness. The plan to address this urgent national priority was outlined in 2010’s Opening Doors, the first-ever federal strategic plan to end veteran homelessness. Together with partners nationwide, the VA launched the End Veterans’ Homelessness initiative, an unprecedented effort to make sure veterans are able to obtain permanent housing and that veterans at risk of homelessness remain housed. One effort related to this partnership is to connect homeless veterans with workforce programs available at the AJCs to ensure they receive appropriate workforce services. Being connected to the labor market is one step towards self-sufficiency, including the attainment of affordable housing.

- IV. Policy and Guidance** Beginning in Program Year (PY) 2016, VETS will require the grantees serving homeless veterans to enroll all participants in the public workforce system through the local AJC while these participants are receiving services through VETS’ homeless veterans program grantees. This is to create a sustainable partnership in which grantees understand each other’s services and participants’ employment needs are met. Grantees can find the closest AJCs here, <http://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/local-help.aspx>. Note that each state may refer to an AJC with a unique brand or name.

Enrollment of homeless veterans program participants in the public workforce system through the local AJC occurs, for the purpose of this initiative, when the homeless veterans program participant receives a Wagner-Peyser Act-funded ES, a JVSG-funded DVOP service or another WIOA title I-funded service, such as WIOA title I services for adults or dislocated workers. Many homeless veterans program grantees are already utilizing AJC services for their participants, and all grantees must begin implementation of this practice as of the effective date of this guidance. Homeless veterans program grantees are responsible for working with appropriate ES, JVSG and WIOA title I staff in the local AJC to facilitate the enrollment of homeless veterans program participants.

It is important to underscore that homeless veterans meet the criterion of having a “significant barrier to employment” consistent with TEGL 19-13 and VPL 03-14 and must be immediately referred to a DVOP specialist or, in instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, another AJC provider of individualized career services when the participant is enrolled in an AJC.¹

Please note that homeless veterans program grantees must enroll their participants into ES, JVSG or WIOA title I services according to the service strategy and timeline outlined in each individual service plan. The Department requires both AJC enrollment of homeless veterans program participants and the receipt of ES, JVSG or WIOA title I services by all participants to occur during the period of performance outlined in the homeless veterans program grant award terms and conditions, including homeless veterans .

Although many VETS’ homeless veterans program grantees have already incorporated regular AJC staff visits into their service delivery model, all grantees should work collaboratively at the local level to ensure the best services are offered to the veterans.

Minimally, homeless veterans program grantees and the local AJC must coordinate and learn about the homeless veterans program services that are offered, as well as the workforce services that may benefit the veteran. Such coordination may include the homeless veterans program grantee staff making a visit to the local AJC to learn about these services offered.

- V. **Tracking Services and Outcomes** VETS’ homeless veterans program grantees and WIOA programs will continue to collect and report outcomes as required by each program. The Department of Labor (DOL) has revised its WIOA Information Collection Requests (ICR) that cover data and reporting requirements for WIOA and other workforce programs, including ES and JVSG. This integrated performance reporting approach will incorporate performance reporting for ES, JVSG, and the homeless veterans programs, and other programs, and will be used by States and grantees to collect and report performance information, such as participant characteristics, services and outcomes.

DOL has added two new data elements into the new Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) to ensure homeless veterans program participants are uniquely identified in the state’s management information system. Further guidance will explain that the following data elements are to be completed for individuals receiving services from one of the homeless veterans programs and ES, JVSG or WIOA title I services:

1. For participants self-identifying as a veteran, a subsequent question will be posed, asking if the veteran is homeless **and** receiving VETS’ homeless veterans program services. (*Element 309 – “Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program Participant” the PIRL*)

¹ Please note that even if a homeless veterans program participant may not meet the specific definition of homeless as identified in VPL 03-14 at the time the participant is enrolled at an AJC, the participant will likely qualify for referral to a DVOP specialist under one of the other categories of veterans with significant barriers to employment.

2. If the answer is yes, the counselor will be asked to provide the five digit grant number of the homeless veterans program grant. (*Element 310 – “Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program Grantee” the PIRL*)

Under these reporting elements, a counselor representing the homeless veterans program grantee **is required** to be present when the veteran is enrolling into a workforce program at the AJC, to properly answer the questions that will identify the veteran as a participant in a homeless veterans program, and provide the 5 digit grant number for element 310 of the PIRL. If the responses to the data elements outlined above are not properly reported, the veteran will not be identified as a homeless veterans program participant and that veteran’s outcomes will not be properly credited to the appropriate grant(s).

VI. Action

Homeless Veterans Program Grantees:

- A. Partner with AJCs to properly enroll all homeless veterans program participants into an ES, JVSG or WIOA title I program.
- B. Ensure a homeless veterans program grantee counselor is present during the enrollment process to facilitate accurate reporting and to facilitate strong working relationships with local AJC workforce programs.
- C. Invite local AJC staff to share information on their services and encourage AJC staff to learn about the services the homeless veterans program grantee offers.
- D. At the time of employment with the grantee, ensure that new homeless veterans program grantee staff members are fully trained on the multitude of AJC services and the AJC enrollment requirements.

ES, JVSG and WIOA Title I Grantees:

- A. Coordinate with the local homeless veterans program grantees, providing an overview of the AJC and the services available.
- B. Partner with local homeless veterans programs to ensure the enrollment of their participants into the appropriate AJC workforce programs.

- ## **VII. Inquiries** Please direct questions regarding this directive to the appropriate VETS or ETA regional office through your respective DVET or Federal Project Officer.