

# Five Year Program Narrative

## INTRODUCTION

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, & OPERATIONS

In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act, Public Law (PL) 107-288, Statutes of 2002, each grant recipient is required to have an approved State Veterans' Program and Budget Plan to operate and deliver employment and workforce services with federal Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS) funds. For Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2010-2014, States must submit a new five-year plan by their designated State Workforce Agency (SWA). The Employment Development Department (EDD) is California's designated SWA.

The EDD is responsible, in coordination with the California Workforce Investment Board and the leadership of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, for the DOL-VETS grant, along with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act (WPA). The State partners with Local Workforce Investment Boards, and other public and private service entities that provide resources and networking within a statewide workforce system and community based One-Stop Career Centers. The State and its partners coordinate a wide array of services, including but not limited to employment services, job training, vocational education, supportive services, and participation in community college programs.

The DOL-VETS grant is the specific resource for assuring all veterans requiring more intensive services receive a proper response (including case management) and are connected to all available assistance from partners in a comprehensive system. This is accomplished with specially trained EDD employees that have a veteran military service background. For FFY 2009-10, the EDD will staff 88.0 Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER), and 164 Disabled Veterans Outreach Personnel (DVOP) that will be strategically deployed in 259 One-Stop Career Centers, 27 military installations, San Diego Balboa Naval Hospital, and the Camp Pendleton Wounded Warrior Center. Of these, eleven LVER staff will serve in the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP), and two will serve in Promoting Reemployment Opportunities for Veterans (PROVET). The EDD's Central Office (based in Sacramento, CA) provides functional oversight, support and coordination to the DOL-VETS grant.

PL 107-288, revised the LVER and DVOP responsibilities, and as a result, California chose to rename LVER to Veteran Workforce Specialist (VWS) and DVOP to Veteran Employment Service Specialist (VESS).

## **A. Projected Employment Outlook for Veterans**

On June 19, 2009, the EDD's Labor Market Information Division (LMID) issued a press release disclosing that California's unemployment rate is at 11.5 percent (Attachment 1). The press release accounts for 839,960 people receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits compared with 467,563 last year. The number of jobs lost in May 2009 is estimated at 177,000. In consideration of California's unemployment statistics, the economic outlook for job seekers is bleak.

The current economy presents a monumental challenge in providing services to California's 2,025,934 veterans and their families, active duty military personnel and recently separated veterans. Currently, veterans face a shrinking job market while having to compete with other job-seekers amidst California's continuing economic recession, and escalating unemployment rate. Each veteran group deserves customized services based on their particular need. The EDD offers services that extend to all military branches, including the California National Guard & Reserve, through its TAP. California's TAP is the largest in the nation, providing services on 27 statewide military installations. On average, 30,000 students participate in 750 classes each year. TAP courses have been conducted onboard deployed aircraft carriers at the request of the United States (US) Navy.

California's goal is to maximize federal and state resources to improve the services and outcomes for veterans. The DOL-VETS grant is leveraged with Federal WIA and WP formula funds, and all available public/private-sector resources to enhance veteran's outcomes. The five-year plan embraces a customer driven response, designed to improve performance and accountability. This abandons a stagnant reaction that produces unsatisfactory results in meeting the employment and training needs of California's veterans.

This plan complies with recent federal and state program requirements, considers the current economic recession and reflects improvements in the service delivery system necessary to respond to the current challenges.

California will promote the hiring and retention of veterans through:

- California law (Assembly Bill 3065, Chapter 590, Statutes of 2008), became effective January 1, 2009, which allows veterans without civil service employee status to take promotional civil service exams (Attachment 2);
- Partnerships with public utilities and community colleges to train and employ veterans (Attachment 3);
- Developing business relationships with various organizations in the health care, banking, transportation and green industries as well as other emerging technology fields;

- Continuing to assess and target veteran-friendly industries for additional recruiting and marketing programs to veterans (Attachment 4);
- Providing WIA funds to public and private sector entities in partnership with the EDD for job training and placement for veterans in high growth fields such as health care, emergency medical technology, construction, security, law enforcement and computer services (Attachment 5);
- Recruiting, training, and preparing VWS and VESS staff in anticipation of higher than average retirement of eligible employees over the next five years.

These additional measures will further improve the outlook for veterans:

- Provide VWS with laptop computers and video projectors for employer presentations on the benefits and advantages of hiring veterans;
- Provide Veteran Program Service Specialist with laptop computers and video projectors;
- Help fund and continue the Governor's Statewide Veterans Job Fairs (Attachment 6);
- Conduct training conferences for VWS/VESS staff;
- Complete research for establishing a Performance Incentive Program in California (Attachment 7);
- Improve the strategic placement of VWS and VESS using labor market information, office/region productivity reports, outcomes measures, and other relevant data;
- Implement a Governance Structure for the Veterans Program (Attachment 8).

## **B. Targeting Services to Veterans Most in Need**

EDD targets services to the following disabled veterans:

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (Chapter 31) clients who have been deemed "Job ready";
- Returning wounded or injured service members and REALifeline participants;
- Transitioning service members;
- PROVET;
- Recently separated veterans;
- Disabled veterans;
- Demobilizing National Guard/Reservists;

- Homeless veterans;
- Incarcerated Veterans or those recently released from incarceration.

Attachment 9 shows outreach activities, partner coordination and the assessment and monitoring of these special targeted veteran populations.

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

To date, the EDD's approach for deploying staff funded by the DOL-VETS grant is to assure that all 259 One-Stop Career Centers have EDD Veteran Program staff proportionate to local veteran populations. Other staff serving in special programs are stationed at appropriate locations, including:

- Four Intensive Services Coordinators/Vocational Rehabilitation Veterans Employment Service Specialist (VR/VESS) in separate Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Offices to coordinate the Chapter 31 program;
- Three new TAP trainer/quality control monitor positions as defined in the TAP section of the five-year plan;
- Eighteen VWS TAP Instructors/Facilitators working and/or stationed at military installations;
- One VWS located at the Camp Pendleton Wounded Warrior Center, providing case management and TAP to military personnel in rehabilitation;
- One VESS stationed at the Balboa Naval Hospital providing REALifeline case management to military personnel and/or designated caregivers;
- Other VWS/VESS provide veteran assistance coverage at Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program locations, homeless shelters, community partner sites, Veterans Administration Medical Facilities and TAP locations.

The EDD's existing strategy is under revision to improve workforce deployments. The following factors are being considered:

- Retirements;
- Office Productivity (Business Process Measures);
- Location of high-demand labor/industry market(s);
- Proximity of community based job training programs;
- Location of WIA Special Veterans Project grants (Attachment 5);
- Military bases/installations in conjunction with Family Support Centers (Attachment 10);
- Number of veterans seeking employment in specific geographic areas.

The following efforts are being made to expeditiously fill DOL-VETS grant funded vacancies:

- A 24-hour on-line exam was made available to applicant, to allow for continuous updating of a qualified candidate pool;
- A statewide prescreening matrix was developed to properly identify qualified applicants;
- Identify site locations for all retirement eligible staff;
- An assignment specific mentoring/training program is being developed for VESS/VWS staff.

For SFY 2009-10, the EDD is reporting four half-time and one full-time positions filled by non-veterans. Four of the five positions are employed in small, remotely located offices. These employees are California State Employee Union employees and their seniority requires that they not be displaced from their areas. The non-veterans will be replaced with qualified veterans when these positions become vacant. The Employment Program Representative exam used to fill these positions is online with continuous testing which is providing the EDD with more qualified veteran candidates.

#### **D. DVOP/VESS**

VESS staff provide a wide range of workforce services to veterans and eligible individuals, with the primary focus of identifying veterans that require intensive services. VESS staff facilitate services through case management to veterans with barriers to employment and with special workforce needs. These services include the following:

- Creating an Individual Assessment Plan, which includes a documented plan of service;
- Counseling and career/vocational guidance;
- Referral of veterans to supportive or remedial services;
- Referral of veterans to job-focused, outcome-driven training and certification;
- Development of Veterans Affairs (VA) funded Special Employer Incentive and On-The-Job training (OJT) slots for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) participants;
- Referral to employment opportunities;
- Maintenance of an up-to-date Network Guide for veteran customers and One-Stop associates;
- Conducting outreach activities to locate veterans for intensive and market services in VR&E, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), Veterans Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) and WIA;

- Participating in TAP activities for service members and their spouses.

Attachment 11 contains additional details on duties specific to the EDD VESS staff.

Four VR-VESS work in VA facilities that provide coordination and job placement for veterans enrolled in the Chapter 31 program. The DVA conducts the rehabilitation program which certifies the veteran is job ready. Thereafter, the VR-VESS provides employment services. The VR-VESS performs the following duties intended to provide careers for Chapter 31 participants:

- Coordinate with the DVA staff, VESS/VWS and One-Stop Career Center resources to provide suitable job placement within 90 days;
- VR-VESS and VR&E coordinate OJT, non-paid work experience, selective job placement, job-seeking skill training, resume writing, job analysis, follow-up services, and labor market information analysis;
- Coordinate with employment specialists to provide selective job development and placement using DVA approved apprenticeship and OJT program employers;
- Market the Chapter 31 programs with the US DVA, at VA out-patient clinics and at all TAP classes;
- Participate in partner orientation meetings;
- Provide assistance to local VESS in response to rehabilitation plans and share information;
- Record progress reports from the Case Manager;
- Provide monthly progress reports to the VR&E Case Manager;
- Work with VESS/ VWS staff and managers at One-Stop Career centers and local field offices through ongoing interaction and reports, and site visits as requested or needed;
- Submit quarterly reports to the Workforce Services Branch Program Coordinator and the DVET on VR&E activities.

Priority of service is provided as detailed in the recently released EDD Workforce Information Bulletin (Attachment 13), and Section G of this plan. Please refer to the Veterans' staffing chart for identification of VR-VESS and contact information.

#### **E. LVER /VWS**

VWS staff advocates employment and training opportunities with businesses, industries, and community organizations. Such activities may include:

- Marketing veterans program services to employers, employer organizations, community-based and other organizations that can assist veterans in securing and/or overcoming employment barriers;

- Coordinating and sharing information at job fairs between employers and veterans intended to lead to gainful employment;
- Networking with local trade unions, apprenticeship programs, educational facilities, local workforce partners, and the business community to promote opportunities for veterans;
- Promoting credentialing and training opportunities for veterans to training providers and credentialing bodies;
- Identifying and contacting federal contract employers to encourage employment opportunities for veterans as required by PL 107-288;
- Facilitating TAP workshops;
- Helping develop, coordinate, and implement the local marketing and outreach plan, as a tool for employers, job seekers, and partners;
- Networking with Veteran Service and Community Based Organizations, employers, and partners to promote the hiring of veterans.

Additional duties are outlined in the VWS Duty Statement (Attachment 12).

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

The EDD is the SWA responsible for other DOL fund sources, including WIA and WP grants. The current Jobs for Veterans State Grant Application offers an approach which improves opportunities for states to better leverage the DOL-VETS grant with other federal resources. For example, Program Year 2008-09 WIA funds are utilized for the administration, statewide initiatives, and competitive grants for employment and training programs. Additionally, some WIA funds provide funding for services to veterans statewide initiatives. The WIA funds improve services to veterans, in the absence of DOL-VETS funding. For example, the annual Job and Career Fairs (Honor a Hero Hire a Vet), and numerous special employment and job training grants for veterans are funded solely from the WIA special project fund (Attachment 6). Moreover, the shift from a “staffing” grant empowers the EDD to render Veteran Program staff more resourceful, through co-investing with other DOL efforts for veterans, thereby improving employment and training outcomes for veterans.

The following specific special initiatives, pilot projects, processes, services, and tools, describes how service providers and partners work together with the VWS in the workforce system, One-Stop Career Centers, State Vocational Rehabilitation Centers, military treatment facilities, Wounded Warrior Transition Units, Homeless Veteran Reintegration Projects, and other locations:

- Governor sponsored press releases regarding WIA special project initiatives and events for job training and placement programs (e.g. Career Fairs and job training, development, and placement programs);

- Posting Information Notices/Bulletins on the statewide workforce system website;
- One-Stop Career Center resource sharing agreements and Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) specifying local plans for overall service delivery strategy for veterans;
- Introduction of integrated services delivery pilot project (Attachment 14);
- Identification and intake process for veterans entering One-Stop Career Centers (Attachment 15);
- Process Measures: Staff and office productivity reports identifying activity levels delivered by veteran program staff;
- Posting of the State Plan on the EDD website;
- Updating the Veteran Services Manual;
- Monitor monthly activity reports for outreach activities to other community based service providers;
- Self Assessment Reports;
- Signs and bulletin boards displayed inside One-Stop Career Centers;
- Vet Central, Job Central National Labor Exchange (NLX) to access federal contractor's jobs to the state web-site for use by VESS and VWS;
- 2009 Program Field Office Audit (identify variances in office services and performance to veterans).

## **G. Priority of Service**

In May 2009, the EDD issued a Workforce Information Notice to all EDD employees, partners in the workforce system (including One-Stop Career Centers), and Local Workforce Administrators on the expectations and requirements for how priority of service should be provided to veterans throughout the employment service delivery system. The guidance and instructions are in response to the 2008 DOL-VETS regulations (38 U.S.C. 4215 (b) and 20 CFR Parts 1001 & 1010) which further explains how priority of service should be applied across all new and existing qualified job training programs.

The Veteran Service Manual is currently being updated to reflect the specific VWS and VESS responsibilities pertaining to the new federal regulations. Priority of Service training to all Veteran Program staff and managers will follow the manual updates. Future training shall also be extended to partners and other applicable parties in the workforce system.

A monitoring plan will be developed in partnership with the DVET to jointly determine the proper assessment tools and methodology for the three primary regions in California (Northern, Los Angeles/Ventura, and Southern). Until then,

EDD will promote and assess input from the local area level from the monthly reports.

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

The EDD is currently researching the opportunity for developing and implementing the DOL-VETS Performance Incentive Award Program in California. Previously, the EDD did not participate because of a state law disallowing monetary payments to individual state employees. The Performance Incentive Award program is incompatible with the current State merit award program that compensates employees for superior or sustained current accomplishments. Nevertheless, it is envisioned that an essential component to this plan is appropriate recognition to groups and/or individuals who provide outstanding performance. Consideration will be given annually for attitude, motivation, program improvement, positive feedback and other indicators to achieve excellence in providing services to veterans. Criteria for all awards will be developed in coordination with EDD partners, VESS/VWS staff, Central Office staff and feedback from veterans receiving employment and training services. The EDD anticipates the team recognition approach, without monetary awards to individual employees, will work in California, as it has in other states. Subsequently, a grant modification will be submitted for FFY 2010-2011 if California chooses to participate in the Performance Incentive Award program.

#### **I. Transition Assistance Program**

Successful implementation of California's TAP program has been achieved through strategically locating EDD staff on military bases wherever feasible. This was accomplished through cooperation and subsequent MOU with on-site Department of Defense (DOD) staff at Navy and Marine Corps Fleet and Family Support Centers, Airman Family Readiness Centers and Army/Coast Guard Transition Offices. These centers provide office space and logistical support for EDD instructors at eight locations. Three-day TAP courses are aligned with the DVA, who provide a four hour briefing on VA benefits including but not limited to G.I. Bill Updates and other Educational Benefits, Healthcare Benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation, VA Loans and burial benefits.

The TAP program is funded via the DOL/VETS. The four agencies contributing to the nationwide program are the DOD, US Department of Homeland Security, US DVA and the US DOL.

The goal of the TAP program is to ease the transition for active duty military members and their spouses into the civilian work force and community. TAP facilitators routinely refer service members and their families to One Stop Centers and EDD's partners who in turn are instrumental in providing customer support to address barriers to employment, as well as information and access to financial, educational, health benefits, and other resources. In FFY 2007-08,

over 27,000 Transitioning Service Members (TSM) participated in 745 TAP workshops. For FFY 2009-10, the EDD anticipates to conduct 750 TAP classes.

For FFY 2009-10, the EDD is requesting three additional TAP staff (Divisional TAP Coordinators) for California due to:

- California's TAP program historically conducts approximately 740 classes on an annual basis. The EDD expects the size of California's TAP program to continue at this level or higher for the next few years;
- The high number of TAP service delivery locations, the long distance between TAP locations and the high number of isolated military installations;
- A limited capacity to respond to short notice from instructors that are not able to make their scheduled classes;
- A 30 day window for contract staff to substitute TAP classes is not the most viable and is the least frequently used method for securing substitute instructors;
- The higher number of courses, logistics, aging workforce, and other factors increase the risk for not meeting obligations to military installations and service members;
- Impromptu requests for instructors to travel Out of the Country for extended periods cut through the back-up safety net for TAP substituting behind one another. Additional staff would help mitigate this risk;
- Special requests for instructors to cover Guard & Reserve courses;
- The gap between TAP and the State's One-Stop Career Centers must be lessened through developing clear policy and business expectations for communications and referrals. Additional staff would help address this issue;
- The State is divided into three major geographical divisions for the State Workforce Agency system – each division will be assigned one of these additional staff;
- TAP Coordinators will have pivotal rolls in helping new personnel acclimate to the TAP program, act as liaisons between DOD staff at bases within their region and coordinate all TAP related activities at a divisional level with Veteran VPSS's who are responsible for oversight of all other Veteran programs within each of California's three field divisions. Duties will also including substituting for last minute emergencies as classroom instructors;
- The three positions will coordinate with the Central Office TAP Coordinator located in Sacramento for reporting and other business support, similar to the VR-VESS operations.

Semi-annual TAP training is envisioned for all TAP instructors. One class will be facilitated by the National Veterans Training Institute staff within the State, while the second will be conducted with appropriate outside contractors or in-house facilitation experts.

Currently all TAP instructor positions are exempt from a post and bid process used to fill other Employment Program Representatives vacancies within the EDD. This exemption was granted due to the high profile positions of TAP instructors within the overall State veterans program.

In an effort to address the need for TAP instructors and other Veteran Representatives, TAP attendees will be screened for potential candidates to join the program and encouraged to apply for employment opportunities.

Consideration is also recommended within the five year scope of this plan to improve compensation levels for all TAP instructors, trainers and coordinator positions to compete effectively with the private sector in acquiring high quality, profession skilled personnel.

## **J. Narrative Budget Information**

The EDD's cost accounting system (CAS) includes several object class cost categories that are direct costs other than Personnel Services (PS) and Personnel Benefits (PB). The following direct cost categories are included in EDD's plan: travel, supplies, and training. These cost categories are considered direct since only the program (Veterans) receives the benefits of these costs. The non-PS and non-PB direct costs for EDD's Veterans program are similar to direct costs for other DOL grants that the EDD administers.

Administrative costs include not only costs derived through the indirect cost rate, but also direct and allocated charges associated with program operation at the state and local levels. Administrative costs have been planned and reflected where they appear in the CAS, i.e., in the appropriate categories specific to costs (salaries, benefits, and appropriate non-personal services expenses).

The DVOP, LVER and TAP programs are assigned specific project codes (time accounting codes) in the CAS. The CAS has the ability to account for the number of hours worked for a particular project code. Through the tracking of the project codes, the EDD is able to distinguish how many hours a certain staff person (either full or half time) has dedicated to Veteran Services.

In accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A87, administrative costs used for DVOP and LVER program operational expenses are included in the budget. Charging appropriate administrative costs directly related with operating a program is consistent with the methodology used with all other federal grant administration.

In compliance with OMB Circular A87, certain State office staff that work directly with the DVOP/LVER programs will charge time to the grants, resulting in the administrative costs. These staff includes the managers and staff responsible for preparation of the grant application and any subsequent grant modifications, and the budget analyst responsible for obtaining and tracking state budget authority for DVOP/LVER.

Staff will charge time based on actual time worked on the DVOP/LVER programs. Management and supervision costs associated with these direct charged staff will be cost allocated, as appropriate, and in accordance with OMB Circular A87 and the way other federal grants are charged. Occasionally other direct charged administrative costs may occur but only to the extent that they are applicable to the DVOP/LVER programs.

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 charges.

TAP staff salaries and benefit costs are calculated based on actual time to be spent by LVERs conducting TAP workshops. LVER staff persons have been instructed to charge to this activity only during the time they are actually conducting TAP workshops. Using the CAS, the same hours will not be charged to more than one activity. (Example: A LVER spending three days conducting a TAP workshop during a particular five day work week will charge 24 hours to "TAP" and 16 hours to "LVER".)