

Chapter 4
JOB READINESS, DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

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Chapter 4 JOB READINESS, DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

4.01 Introduction

Most Veterans' employment programs, whether administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Small Business Administration (SBA), or another federal agency, are designed to contribute to the Veteran's readjustment to civilian life. Public Law 96-466 established suitable employment as a fundamental criterion of successful readjustment for Veterans participating in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program. Employment services, including job development and placement, are central to VR&E's mission.

This chapter provides detailed information on job accommodations, job readiness, direct placement services, job development and analysis, and modifications to the job. Statutory and regulatory references are also cited in this chapter.

4.02 References and Resources

Laws:	Public Law 96-466 Americans with Disabilities Act
Regulations:	38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 21.250(b)(2)
VA Forms (VAF):	VAF 28-1905d, Special Report of Training
Resources:	Dictionary of Occupational Titles Occupational Outlook Handbook
Websites:	www.disability.gov www.askjan.org www.wave.net/upg/immigration/dot_index.html#MENU www.bls.gov/OCO www.dol.gov/vets

4.03 Job Readiness

a. General Information

A Veteran must first be declared "job ready" before a case manager provides him/her employment services or post-employment services. Job ready refers to a Veteran's ability to obtain and maintain suitable employment after

receiving the services necessary to become suitably employable as outlined in his/her rehabilitation plan.

A Veteran with a disability who is job ready should meet the same expectations as any applicant for employment who does not have a disability. In general, an employer's expectations for an applicant include the following:

- Demonstrates proper workplace decorum
- Works effectively with others
- Understands the requirements of the job
- Acts responsibly and with dignity
- Has the skills and knowledge required to perform the duties of the job

b. Requirements

It is the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's (VRC) responsibility to make a determination for declaring a Veteran job ready before he/she is provided employment services. The determination must include the following verifications:

1. Documentation such as a diploma, certification from a training facility or transcript of records that demonstrate the Veteran has completed the education or other training outlined in his/her Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP).
2. Completion of any required certification or license.
3. No barriers, such as disability conditions, family situations, etc., exist that may prevent the Veteran from obtaining or maintaining suitable employment.
4. Possession of job-seeking skills.

c. Job-Seeking Skills

The VRC must assess the Veteran's job-seeking skills before declaring the Veteran to be job ready. This includes ensuring that the Veteran possesses adequate job-seeking skills needed to begin his/her job search. Job-seeking skills training may be provided by a VRC, Employment Coordinator (EC), community agency or private contractor, if the Veteran is determined in need

of this training and the training is included in the IWRP. Job-seeking skills and other factors needed to begin a job search include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Creating a comprehensive resume and cover letter
- Utilizing the Internet to search and apply for jobs
- Networking with others
- Utilizing local labor market information to identify growing occupational fields
- Preparing for and participating in an interview
- Negotiating salary requirements
- Following up after an interview

d. Documentation for Job Ready Declaration

It is the VRC's responsibility to assess the Veteran's job readiness and make a formal declaration of job readiness upon completion of the IWRP. The VRC must accurately and clearly justify and document the declaration of the Veteran's job readiness on VAF 28-1905d, Special Report of Training (See Appendix O. VA Forms), or CWINRS Notes. The narrative must clearly explain that there are no impediments in the Veteran's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. This documentation must be filed in the middle flap of the Counseling/Evaluation/Rehabilitation (CER) folder.

Additionally, the case manager must ensure that the Veteran's CER folder contains a documented contact with the Veteran that clearly demonstrates that the case manager has established communication with the Veteran while making the job ready determination.

e. Effective Date for Opening Job Ready Status

The effective date for declaring a Veteran job ready is the date the documentation for the declaration is completed. A Veteran cannot be declared job ready on the sole basis that the Veteran obtained suitable employment.

The effective date for placing the case in Job Ready (JR) Status is the same date as the declaration of the Veteran's job readiness.

f. No Retroactive Declaration of Job Readiness

A case manager cannot make a retroactive declaration of a Veteran's job readiness. This will include instances in which a Veteran completed the objectives of his/her IWRP but cannot be located or does not respond to motivational contacts, or obtained suitable employment and resumes contact with his/her case manager. Determination for job readiness may begin at the time the case manager re-establishes contact with the Veteran. This contact must be clearly documented on VAF 28-1905d or CWINRS Notes and filed in the middle flap of the Veteran's CER folder.

g. Veteran Determined Not Job Ready

If a case manager determines that the Veteran is not currently job ready, the case manager must work with the Veteran to determine the services he/she needs to become ready to obtain or maintain suitable employment. Once the services are identified, the case manager must modify the Veteran's IWRP to include the additional services to be provided.

4.04 Job Placement

a. Direct Placement Service

This requires the case manager's active involvement and personal intervention with employer on behalf of the Veteran. Direct job placement occurs within a network that involves employers, employees and service providers.

1. Direct placement entails the following activities:

- Matching the Veteran's needs, abilities and aspirations to the demands, salary and other characteristics of a specific employment objective
- Communicating the terms of the match to the parties involved and working to bring about a successful job interview for both the Veteran and employer
- Establishing and maintaining placement aid tools (e.g., networking information on file or database to facilitate matching and communication activities, etc.)

2. Successful placements are mutually beneficial to the employer, Veteran, and VA. The roles of each party and services involved in the direct job placement process are discussed below.

- (a) Employers

Employers are concerned about timeliness in filling job vacancies and the productivity of newly hired employees. When collaborating with employers, the case manager is regarded as the service provider. The case manager functions as a salesperson in a consumer-oriented market. Successful placement of Veterans creates goodwill with employers and often results in long-lasting working relationships that aid in future placements. Therefore, the case manager should consider the employers' time constraints and staffing needs. This means that the case manager refers only qualified and carefully matched applicants.

- (b) Veterans

The primary considerations in determining whether a Veteran is a qualified candidate for a specific job are experience, credentials and academic or vocational training. However, other evaluations and supportive services may be necessary to ensure that the Veteran is job ready. For example, interpersonal and readjustment issues may require resolution before a Veteran is ready to seek employment.

- (1) Employment Services as Part of an IWRP

All cases with an IWRP or combined IWRP/Individualized Employment Assistance Plan (IEAP), including those that have been developed under the rapid access to employment track, will be placed in RTE status while job readiness services are provided. The IWRP will include employment objectives, even if employment-related activities are not planned to take place until after the Veteran completes formal training or education. The case manager may provide services such as developing interviewing and job-seeking skills to improve the Veteran's employability while the Veteran is participating in an IWRP.

- (2) Job Interview Referrals Prior to the Declaration of Job Readiness

A referral to a job interview is a disservice to both the Veteran and potential employer if the Veteran is not job ready. The Veteran's future employability may be impaired and the service

provider's credibility with the employer may be damaged if a referral for a job interview is made prematurely.

The case manager can provide a variety of services to ensure that the Veteran is ready to proceed to the interview phase of the job search process prior to the referral for a job interview. Examples of these services include, but are not limited to:

- Mock interviewing sessions
- Informational interviewing
- Development of a comprehensive resume
- Training in successful interviewing techniques

(c) Service Providers

A case manager may utilize services available from various service providers as tools to increase the Veteran's marketability, connect with potential employers and address any employer issues. These services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Job analyses, modifications to the job, and post-placement services are utilized to ensure a successful placement.
- (2) Services available to the Veteran such as supplies, training and payment of license fees will increase the Veteran's marketability.
- (3) Special hiring programs that are useful in placing Veterans. Programs such as noncompetitive placement in a public sector agency and unpaid work experience are direct placement tools that a case manager may consider (refer to M28R.VI.A.8 for more information on these programs, as well as other special hiring authorities).

b. Job Development

According to 38 CFR 21.250(b)(2), job development is defined as "a comprehensive professional service to assist the individual Veteran to actually obtain a suitable job, and not simply the solicitation of jobs on behalf of the Veteran." Since job development is a difficult and demanding activity, the case manager may need to coordinate with a variety of service providers to accomplish aspects of job development, to include:

1. Public sector agencies, such as local, state and federal government agencies. The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), which is a Department of Labor program, provides employment and training services to eligible Veterans at the state level through two principle programs:
 - Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP). A DVOP specialist provides outreach and offers assistance to Veterans with disabilities and other Veterans by promoting community and employer support for employment and training opportunities.
 - Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs). An LVER is a state employee located in state employment offices and provides employment assistance to Veterans, including processing complaints regarding the observance of Veterans' preference.

For more information on these programs, see www.dol.gov/vets.

2. Not-for-profit organizations such as public post-secondary schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities provide career services to assist students with job placement. On-campus recruiting and job fairs are common practice in these settings, providing excellent opportunities for job development.
3. For-profit entities, such as employment agencies. Employment agencies serve both large and small organizations across all industry sectors, thus providing opportunities for job development in a variety of occupational settings.

4.05 Job Analysis

a. General Information

Job analysis is an essential aspect of direct placement. It is a process used to identify and determine the particular job duties and requirements, and the relative importance of these duties for a given job. An important concept is that the analysis is conducted on the specifics of the job, not the person performing the duties of the job. Job analysis is particularly useful when dealing with small businesses, as many of the jobs in this setting have a variety of ancillary duties.

b. Methodology

A case manager may need to conduct an on-site analysis of a prospective job when precise information about job task requirements and the work environment are not known. A job analysis should identify the following factors of a job:

1. Key tasks and responsibilities.
2. Required problem-solving and decision-making skills.
3. Management responsibilities.
4. Contact with others.
5. Job complexity.
6. Work environment.
7. Physical and cognitive demands.
8. Education, experience, license and/or certification requirements.

c. Job Profile

A case manager may utilize the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) and the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) to identify several aspects of an occupation, to include:

- Training and education requirements
- Earnings
- Working conditions
- Expected job growth/decline rate
- Physical demands
- Essential job duties

This information, coupled with an understanding of the Veteran's strengths and weaknesses, will increase the likelihood of a successful placement.

For more information on or access to the DOT and/or OOH see www.wave.net/upg/immigration/dot_index.html#MENU and www.bls.gov/OCO.

d. Other Important Considerations

Additional issues may prove to be barriers to employment. For example, the location of accessible parking, entrances, restrooms and dining facilities are part of a comprehensive job site analysis. The identification of these barriers assists in the development of an individualized accommodation plan.

4.06 Modifications to the Job

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Title I, requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide qualified individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from the full range of employment-related opportunities available to others. For example, it prohibits discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, pay, social activities and other privileges of employment. It restricts questions that can be asked about an applicant's disability before a job offer is made, and it requires that employers make reasonable accommodation to the limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations and workplace modifications provide the same stability to employees with disabilities, allowing the opportunity to capitalize on their strengths and independence. The case manager must assist the Veteran in identifying and requesting these services from the employer. The Job Accommodation Network that is found at www.askjan.org is a valuable resource in the identification of possible accommodations. Additionally, lists of public, not-for-profit and private sector organizations and programs providing information and assistance on reasonable accommodation and job modifications may be found at www.disability.gov under the topics of "Employment" and "Technology." For more information on reasonable accommodation, refer to M28R.VI.A.8.