



VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

Preliminary Observations on Changes to Veterans' Employment Programs

Highlights of [GAO-05-662T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) administers two programs designed to assist the roughly 700,000 veterans who are unemployed in any given month. These two programs, the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) program, fund employment, training, and job placement services to veterans. In 2002, Congress passed the Jobs for Veterans Act (JVA), which redefined the roles of DVOP and LVER staff and required that VETS establish a new performance accountability system.

This testimony is based on GAO's ongoing work in this area and focuses on three aspects: (1) the separation of DVOP's and LVER's roles and responsibilities; (2) VETS' performance accountability system for DVOP and LVER staff; and (3) VETS' system for monitoring DVOP and LVER performance.

What GAO Found

VETS has established separate roles for DVOP and LVER staff and has provided policy guidance and training to states explaining these changes. Under JVA, states now determine how many DVOP and LVER staff they hire, where to place them within the local workforce areas, and 23 states are planning to use some part-time DVOP staff. There are indications that integrating DVOP and LVER staff into the local workforce offices remains challenging. While VETS has issued guidance on an incentive program to encourage improved performance, state implementation of the program has varied, and 11 states do not plan to participate.

VETS has implemented employment measures for DVOP and LVER staff, but a minimum standard that all states must meet for veterans entering employment will not be available before 2007. VETS reported meeting Labor's goal of achieving a 58-percent employment rate for all veteran job seekers during program year 2003, but fell somewhat short of reaching a 60-percent employment goal for disabled veterans. Assessing how well DVOP and LVER programs are serving veterans may continue to be difficult due to ongoing concerns about data reliability.

VETS implemented a monitoring system in program year 2004 that relies primarily on state self-assessments of performance in conjunction with on-site reviews. It is unclear, however, how VETS staff at the state, regional, and national levels will use this information consistently to guide or improve the DVOP and LVER programs. VETS is working with other Labor agencies to coordinate monitoring and enforcement efforts.

Summary of Performance Outcomes for the DVOP and LVER Programs, Program Year 2003

Outcome measure	All veterans and eligible persons		Disabled veterans	
	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal
Entered employment rate	58 percent	58 percent	53 percent	60 percent
Rate of retention in employment at 6 months	79 percent	72 percent	77 percent	65 percent

Source: Fiscal year 2004 Performance Budget for VETS and VETS 200 report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-662T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Sigurd Nilsen at (202) 512-7215 or nilsens@gao.gov.