VETERAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TOOLKIT

A Project

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in

Counseling
(Vocational Rehabilitation)

by

Kevin Walker

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VETERAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TOOLKIT

A Project

by

Kevin Walker

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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

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Kevin Walker

Statement of Problem

Attaining successful employment in today's workforce is particularly unusual for individuals with disabilities. The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services support disabled veterans seeking employment. Nevertheless, veterans at the VR&E are in need of employment skills and knowledge of the job search process to gain entrance into the employment world. This project is intended to provide information to individuals with service connected disabilities about key features of the job search process to assist Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) and Employment Coordinators (EC) in continuing the advancement of delivery of services and overall outcome rates of veterans.

Sources of Data

Research materials for this project were obtained from books, a toolkit, peer-reviewed journals, rehabilitation journals, the Department of Veterans Affairs M28R, Federal Code manual and previous CSUS projects. VR&E was a key resource that assisted the author in gaining vital information on the job exploration process. VR&E employees included the vocational rehabilitation officer and assistant officer, vocational
rehabilitation counselors, employment coordinator, rehabilitation specialist, professors and staff from San Joaquin Delta College, and fellow veterans, who provided dialogue on the need for this project.

_________________________, Committee Chair
Guy Deaner, Ph.D.

_________________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my mother, father and family members for their unwavering support of me during my educational endeavors. At times, it seemed as if this goal was unattainable, but here I am about to receive a Master degree.

Thank you. I want thank all my cohorts and members of the Mob Squad: Barbara, Jerry, Lecletus, and Terry for their encouragement throughout this process. The countless hours at night doing homework and studying for exams has finally paid off. I want to thank the professors in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Department at Sacramento State: Dr. Deaner, Dr. Koch, and Mr. Mark Frayser. Thank you for providing such an enjoyable learning environment. I would have never accomplished this goal without all of your continued dedication toward the program and student success.

Numerous times, since being accepted in the program, I found myself in the presence of past and present students working in our field of study. It was an encouraging aspect, having direct dialogue with fraternity members willing and ready to assist me upon my graduation.

Equally important in my progression was the Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services Office, Sacramento, California. Thank you for accepting me as one of your own throughout my development. The countless staff meeting and daily training sessions taught me the step-by-step procedures
in becoming an effective counselor. Finally, thank you to all my teachers, school
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The scope of this project is the revision and editing of an existing published vocational rehabilitation resource of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) programs for the improvement of vocational rehabilitation service delivery. This project generated from the author’s work at the San Joaquin County Veterans Service Office and VR&E in Stockton, California when he was employed as a work-study student and later as an intern counselor in the Sacramento satellite office of the Oakland Regional Office. The author paid close attention to the vocational rehabilitation process of the VR&E program to ensure he maintained empathy as well as remained objective to the client’s needs and goals.

Many veterans are returning home with life-changing physical disabilities, mental health challenges, and cognitive disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), amputations, blast injuries, and gunshot wounds, and in some cases Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

It is incumbent on the VA, and society at large, to make the transition to civilian life and positive employment a priority and to provide the ongoing services and support needed so veterans can once again become productive individuals and make valuable contributions to themselves, their families, and society.
During his tenure as an intern at the VR&E satellite office out of Sacramento, California, the author worked under Norman Corson, MA, EDD, VCRC, NCC, and Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor. Under Dr. Corson’s supervision, the author met with the veteran after assessment to develop an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). Each IWRP includes a mutually agreed upon identified employment goal and the objectives or tasks recommended and needed to complete the referral process for employment involving skill development and training.

A second plan is developed later in the process called an Individual Employment Assistance Plan (IEAP). An IEAP is a signed agreement between the Employment Counselor (EC) or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) and veteran. An IEAP specifies all necessary services to assist the veteran in obtaining and maintaining suitable employment. The purpose of the IEAP is to assure that a comprehensive, thoughtful approach is taken toward job placement, enabling eligible veterans to secure suitable employment.

During the identification of resources to support the client’s individual need for vocational rehabilitation, the author began to formulate the framework for a resource that can provide a user-friendly guide and structured experience for program participants. VR&E has not published a consolidated resource to guide and support the veteran after the IEAP process. Finding and utilizing the California Rehabilitation Toolkit (Block, 1994) had facilitated the delivery of a tool to meet the identified need for a well thought-out structured experience for veterans and VR&E staff; however, the toolkit is out of
Since that time, the number of available resources has been developed and access to the Internet and social media have changed the climate of the job search. In 1994, the standard way was to provide a hard copy of a resume and cover letter. Face-to-face interviews and job searches were conducted on a job hotline and through the Employment Development Department (EDD). Currently, the standard way to conduct a job search is through social media and the internet, this means providing an electronic resume, cover letter, job search, and conducting interviews through visual face time on a computer.

The revision and utilization of the Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Toolkit will provide specific information to the veterans with disabilities including resource referrals and research templates for personal use. The renaming of the California Rehabilitation Toolkit to the Veterans Rehabilitation Toolkit is to provide veterans with a step-by-step guide of the processes in the civilian sector, which will enable veterans to gain suitable employment. This new information provides a toolkit that will aid the veteran in the following areas: pre-employment job search, networking, writing cover letters, resume writing, completing the employment application, interview techniques, interview follow-up strategies and appropriate attire for the job search.

**Statement of the Problem**

A veteran with a “service connected” disability is one with a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. Severity of one's disability is scaled from 0% to 100%, and eligibility for compensation depends on one's rating.
Additionally, probability for effective outcomes in job placement and Vocational Rehabilitation improve with declining disability ratings (Erickson & Rudstam, 2014).

The need for a service or product such as that which reaches the masses has grown over the past five years and the caseload of the VR&E has unmanageable levels. In 2008, the average caseload of a VR&E was approximately 200. The number has grown in some offices to a caseload of 600 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2014).

VA reported a national average of 139 cases per VRC as of March 31, 2013. VR&E managers and staff in four of the offices contacted said high workloads impede their ability to spend sufficient time working with individual veterans. VA has made changes to VR&E procedures intended to ease VRCs’ workloads by reducing paperwork. The program’s outcomes from 2004–2012 rehabilitated 28.9% to successful employment, discontinued and unemployed 17%, as of the end of fiscal year 2012 according to U.S. Government Accountability Office (2014). "The annual application and service delivery for the northern California offices exceed 20,000 veterans" (N. Corson, personal communication, February 22, 2014).

This number reflects the level of need for the anticipated Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Toolkit resource. Information is current, but veterans do not know how to access and/or it is not easy to use. These are the problems the author addressed in his project. There is the need for structured resources delivering positive services to disabled veterans participating in the VA vocational rehabilitation program and to provide
information veterans will find helpful in their communication and engagement with prospective employers who may be reluctant to hire a disabled veteran.

This new work force will require assessment training and most importantly acceptance from the employment community. The *Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Toolkit* is a resource to aid the veteran and others in understanding the process and needs of successful vocational rehabilitation services.

**Definition of Terms**

**Disabled Veteran**

(1) A veteran entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary, or (2) A person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [USDVA], 2011).

**Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program [DVOP]**

A program of federal assistance through grants to states to staff full-time and half-time Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program Specialists as the state determines appropriate and efficient to carry out intensive services in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4103A (U.S. Department of Labor [USDOL], 2011).

**Employment Assistance Plan [IEAP]**

An Individualized Employment Written plan or intervention strategy for serving an individual which, as a result of an assessment of the veteran’s economic needs,
vocational interests, aptitudes, work history, etc., defines a reasonable vocational or employment goal and the developmental services or steps required to reach the goal and which documents the accomplishments made by the individual. (USDVA, 2011). The IEAP is developed following a period of rehabilitation services provided in an IWRP and a declaration of job ready. In some instances, it is possible to develop a combined IWRP/IEAP. The IEAP outlines the services designed to lead to job placement.

**Employment Handicap [EH]**

An impairment of a veteran's ability to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment consistent with his or her abilities, aptitudes, and interests. The impairment must result in substantial part from a service-connected disability. For veterans within the 12-year basic period of eligibility and rated at 20% or more, a finding of employment handicap results in entitlement to VR&E services (USDVA, 2011).

**Employment Service**

The state level organization or public labor exchange system affiliated with the Department of Labor’s United States Employment Service for Veterans interested in pursuing careers at VA. Services include employment counseling, assistance in identifying transferable military skills (skills matching), qualifications and career assessment, assistance in drafting competitive resumes, instruction in developing comprehensive job search strategies, and direct job placement assistance. VRCs also advocate on behalf of Veterans, promoting the values, work ethic, leadership,
dedication, skills, and qualifications Veterans possess, all of which make them ideal candidates to fill any position in the Federal sector (USDVA, 2011).

**Follow-up**

The tracking of clients for a period of time up to 180 days after initial placement into employment, last referral date for services, or completion of training programs to determine current status, outcome, or whether to offer additional services such as additional referral, job retention advisement, etc. (USDOL, 2011).

**IWRP**

Written Rehabilitation Plan mutually agreed upon by counselor and veteran (USDVA, 2012a). Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)

An IWRP is a plan for aiding the VRC, the qualified individual, and the service provider(s) to meet the individual’s vocational goal as a team. IWRP is a general term that includes plans of service developed for Rapid Access to Employment, Reemployment, Employment through Long-Term Services, and Self-Employment rehabilitation plans. See M28R, Part IV, Section C, Chapters 5 – 8 for specific procedural guidance on the development of an IWRP, as indicated by the selection of track of service (USDVA, 2012a).

**Job Development Services**

The process of marketing a program participant to employers, informing employers about what the participant can do and soliciting a job interview for that
individual with the employer targeted job development. The process also includes the development of one or more job openings or training opportunities with one or more employers using a variety of techniques and means of contact (USDOL, 2011).

**Job Placement Services**

Job placement services are geared toward placing participants in jobs and may involve activities such as job search assistance, training, or job development. These services are initiated to enhance and expedite participants’ transition from training to employment (USDVA, 2011).

**Job Search Assistance**

An activity that focuses on building practical skills and knowledge that helps identify employer contact and helps a veteran conduct successful interview with employers. Various approaches may be used to include participation in a job club, receive instruction in identifying personal strengths and goals, resume application preparation, learn interview techniques, and receive labor market information.

Job search assistance is often a self-service activity in which individuals obtain information about specific job openings or general jobs or occupational information (USDVA, 2011).
**Service Connected Disability**

A physical or mental disability that was a result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. Severity of one's disability is scaled from 0% to 100%, and eligibility for compensation depends on one's rating (USDVA, 2011).

**Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor [VRC]**

Rehabilitation counselors help veterans with emotional and physical disabilities live independently. They work with clients to overcome or manage the personal, social, and professional effects of disabilities on employment or independent living (USDVA, 2011).

**Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment [VR&E]**

Veterans with disabilities may receive help with job training, employment accommodations, resume development, and job seeking skills coaching. Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment is a part of the DVA. Other services may be provided to assist veterans in starting their own businesses or independent living services for those who are severely disabled and unable to work in traditional employment (USDVA, 2011).

**Limitations of the Project**

The primary limitation of this project is the restriction of identified non-VA resources to the catchment area of the greater Sacramento metropolitan and rural communities. A secondary limitation is the fact that the *Veterans Vocational*
Rehabilitation Toolkit is a non-VA published resource and is not required use by VA or veteran clients of the VR&E program of vocational rehabilitation services. A third limitation is the reality that, while the vocational rehabilitation exercises and tools may be decade timeless (good for 10+ years) the rapid change of VA VR&E standards of practice (SOP) and the founding and disbandment of community resources is more rapid. This resource will become dated in both regards within five years and will require research and revision to maintain accurate.

**Organization of the Project**

Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the identified problem, definition of terms, and project limitations organization of the project. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature collected and reviewed on the background, legislation, implementation and past practices of the service providers for our disabled veterans. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology including review of sources and methods used to research the literature for substantive information to develop the toolkit. Chapter 4 contains the summary and recommendation. The toolkit is in the Appendix.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter covers vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with disabilities. The first section reviews literature about the benefits of Job Clubs for veterans with disabilities. The second section's focal point is Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) services for veterans with disabilities. The third section reviews literature for job and social networking in the job search process. The final sections provide literature analysis with regard to job-seeking skills that include interviewing, resume review, informational interviews, and mentoring disabled veterans seeking suitable employment. These sections also address current methods of the job search process, including information on how to maximize the hiring potential of veterans with disabilities.

Job Clubs

It is widely considered joining a job club increases a person's capability to gain suitable employment. Azrin and Besalel (1980) were the founders of the Job Club method and they developed a book titled Job Club Counselor’s Manual, A Behavioral Approach to Counseling in 1980. According to the authors, “The goal of the Job Club method of counseling is to obtain a job of the highest feasible quality within the shortest feasible time period for all participating job seekers” (Azrin & Besalel, 1980, p. 43). According to the author "Job Club teaches job seekers how to emphasize distinctive personal and social skills in addition to work skills. Such personal skills are placed on
the job seeker’s resume in addition to the clients making contacts with job leads and interviewing” (p. 43).

The Job Club teaches job seekers how to be successful with job inquiries and job leads to generate contacts. The Job Club Counselor is committed to helping every member obtain a job. Counselors view every job seeker as employable. Whether the member is a service connected disabled veteran or a non-veteran with a physically handicapped, the counselor assumes that employment is possible and the only obstacle to be overcome is finding the right job. Providing effective vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with disabilities presents unique and rewarding challenges for rehabilitation professionals (Frain, Bishop, & Bethel, 2010).

The Job Club method consists of specific activities designed to teach participants how to successfully conduct their own job search. A typical Job Club includes the following components:

1. Team building and personal encouragement of group members by the trainer.
2. Clearly articulating the goals of the Job Club to identify a career goal and find satisfying employment.
3. Training in how to obtain occupational information on jobs and career fields of interest.
4. Constructing a script of what to say to a potential employer, whether contact is by telephone or in Person.
5. Practicing how to assertively counter reasons employers offer for not hiring the applicant.


7. Learning how to network with people in one’s own social circle.

8. Preparing answers for anticipated interview questions.


10. Preparing a resume.


   Job Clubs help the individuals in gaining improved understanding of the job search processes. Kondo (2009) reported:

   Job club members benefited from group learning, increased accountability, networking opportunities, emotional support, helping other members, and enhanced understanding of the context of their experiences. Job club members also enjoyed lower levels of frustration with the search process… and devoted more time on average to job-search activities.

**Historical Perspective of the Job Search Methods for Veterans with Disabilities**

Vocational rehabilitation refers to any program that is designed to restore individuals with disabled to their highest physical, mental, social, vocational, and economic level of functioning (Encyclopedia of Business, n.d.). The primary goal of vocational rehabilitation programs across the country is to assist disabled individuals obtain gainful employment, achieve self-sufficiency and achieve independence (National
According to Rubin and Roessler (2008), pre-employment vocational skills’ training is a very important component of a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation service delivery package. The roots of vocational rehabilitation in America can be traced back to the early 19th century when specialized workshops were developed to address issues relating to disabilities (Kundu & Schiro-Geist, 2006). The Perkins Institute was the first disability specific workshop.

The workshop was incorporated in Boston in 1829 and was designed to train blind individuals for manufacturing jobs (Rubin & Roessler, 2008). According to Kundu and Schiro-Geist (2006), the first vocational rehabilitation program that specifically targeted veterans with disabilities came into existence after World War I. In 1918, Congress passed P.L. 65-178, the Soldiers Rehabilitation Act, which provided retraining and placement of veterans with disabilities who had served in the United States Military prior to and during World War I. Rubin and Roessler (2008) stated that the Soldiers Rehabilitation Act is considered to have provided the greatest stimulus to the vocational rehabilitation service delivery process during that time. The Soldiers Rehabilitation Act also serves as the foundation for a long line of vocational rehabilitation legislation that followed (Rubin & Roessler, 2008).

Rubin and Roessler (2008) stated further that the rehabilitation program created through P.L. 65-178 was administered by the Federal Board for Vocational Education. On August 24, 1921, control of veterans’ rehabilitation was transferred to the newly created Veterans’ Bureau. In 1930, Congress created the Veterans Administration by
combining three bureaus, the Veterans’ Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions, and the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Veterans. In 1943, Congress passed P.L. 78-16, which provided that any eligible veteran may receive up to four years of training specifically directed to restoring employability. Under this program, vocational rehabilitation services were provided to more than 600,000 post World War II Veterans (Rubin & Roessler, 2008).

Over times, the range of the vocational rehabilitation program has been modified and expanded through legislation to better fulfill its mission. The program has undergone many name changes and has often been aligned with a variety of federal state and local agencies including the U. S. Department of Labor [USDOL] (Rubin & Roessler, 2008). Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [USDVA] and USDOL along with other federal state and local agencies work together to take on the challenge of providing effective vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with disabilities (Department of Labor, 2014).

The function of VR&E is to help veterans with service-connected disabilities become suitably employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living. The program offers a number of services to help each eligible veteran reach his or her rehabilitation goal. These services include vocational and personal counseling, education and training, financial aid, job assistance, and, if needed, medical and dental treatment. A veteran who is eligible for an evaluation under Chapter 31 must first apply
for services and receive an appointment with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor [VRC] (USDVA, 2011d). There are five tracks of services that include:

1. Reemployment services – This track of service is designed for individuals participating in the military reservist who were activated into active duty military service and are now separating from active duty looking to return to prior or other employment;

2. Rapid access to employment services – This track of service is for those disabled veterans who already have the skills, education, and/or training needed in today’s job market to gain suitable employment and are in need of job placement services;

3. Self-employment services – This track of service is explored for veterans with severe disabilities who would encounter severe limitations or burdens seeking employment through traditional paths, who need more flexible work schedules, or need a more accommodating work environment due to the severity of their disabilities;

4. Employment through long-term services – This track of services is for disabled veterans who need additional specialized training and/or education to obtain and maintain suitable employment; and

5. Independent living services – Independent living services are for severely will be evaluated for daily independent living needs (Arje & Piaseczny, 2014).
Services

Services with the tracks include a comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment, Vocational counseling and rehabilitation planning for employment services, Employment services such as job-training, job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work readiness assistance, Assistance finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations, On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences, Post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical or business school, Supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals, Independent living services for Veterans unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities. (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012b, para. 2)

In the 21st century there are more than just VR&E to assist veteran. The University of Colorado's National Learning Center, is the home of the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI, 2011a). The National Veterans Training Institute was established in 1986 to further develop and enhance the professional skills of veteran employment and training service providers throughout the United States. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (NVTI, 2011a).

Training is in Denver, Colorado and at selected regional sites in the U.S. and abroad (NVTI, 2011a). The program offers the Ultimate Job Search [UJS] Video Series
and an Electronic Interactive Workbook. This is applicable to job seekers who are unemployed, looking for occupational change for the better, layoffs, career transition, or new job seekers (NVTI, 2011b). The Ultimate Job Search is a series designed for Employment Service, Military Transition Sites and individual job seekers. The five-part job UJS series provides the blueprint of the job search aspects in detail and takes the job seeker from the very start of the job search all the way through to how to successfully hold onto, and excel in, the job. The UJS series consists of five separate video programs such as: (a) Program 1, Starting the Job Search; (b) Program 2, Job Search Techniques; (c) Program 3, Writing Effective Resumes; (d) Program 4, Interviewing with Confidence; and (e) Program 5, Success on the job. The series also includes an interactive, online workbook that provides job seekers with sample applications, resume tips, interviewing skills practice and everything needed for an effective job search.

Networking & Social Media

An out-of-work person knows an important word about the job search process is networking (Bolles, 2013). What is networking and why is it important?

It provides a valuable exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions that specifically cultivate productive relationships for employment or business and is an important aspect of the job search. People in a network may be able to give a job seeker job leads, offer advice and information about a particular company or industry, and introduce a job seeker to others so they can expand their network (Hansen,
Networking incorporates developing professional relationships that could arise throughout a career.

It is not a one-way relationship and it builds over time (Mathison & Finney, 2010). How is a network built? Think of a network as a spider web, with the job seeker positioned in the middle. Individuals with disabilities seek out those with whom they have no connection and contact them directly. Hansen (2014) stated, “It’s a well-known fact that the best way to find a job is through networking” (p. 1). Savino and Krannich (2009) wrote, “Networking is the process of purposefully developing relations with others. Networking in the job search involves connecting and interacting with other individuals who can be helpful to you” (p. 111).

Krannich and Krannich (2005) stated, “The process of networking involves connecting, building, and nurturing networks of relationships that generate three critical components in an effective job search--information, advice, and referrals” (p. 176). Owens and Young (2008) stated, “Networking is an arrangement of people crossed at regular intervals by other people, all of whom are cultivating mutually beneficial, give-and-take, win-win relationships.’ The key to effective networking is not who you know but who knows YOU!” (p. 23).

In the past decade social media has promoted instant and expansive connections to an extensive network of people in a quick and convenient way. It has revolutionized the way we communicate as a society (O'Shea, 2012). Based on a general social media usage survey conducted July 18 through September 30, 2013 by Smith and Duggan
(2013), among adults online in the U.S., 42% now use multiple social networking sites. Usage has drastically increased since 2008 so job-hunting has moved more and more online. Since then, social media and well-known websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and other various websites have gained in popularity (Bolles, 2013). According to Weddle (2014) and Abram (2014), over a third of Human Resource departments visited social networking sites to look for information about employment candidates. In addition, these sites enable individuals with disabilities the opportunity for others to get to know them and to showcase what they can accomplish (Bolles, 2013).

The most valuable social networking site is LinkedIn. It provides a job seeker with an opportunity to stay connected to thousands of online groups. For example, there are groups for people who work in the same profession, went to the same college, or live in the same geographical location.

- **URL:** www.linkedin.com
- **Background:** It is used by at least 200 million people worldwide. Employers around the world who are searching for perspective employees are among them.
- **General Description:** LinkedIn gives a job seeker a “profile” page on which they can write anything about themselves and their history that you want to, using the standardized format or template that LinkedIn provides.
- **Usefulness to Job-Hunters:** If a job seeker has contacted a particular employer, most of them now search to see what there is posted about them on LinkedIn
(and on the internet in general, anywhere and everywhere) before deciding to hire them.

How does Facebook support Individuals with Disabilities? Facebook has an abundant amount of support and advisory groups that help individuals with disabilities maintain and seek employment. Facebook is a good place to start if a person is job hunting or just seeking to network. While Facebook seems like a way to post a few photos or let friends know about important events, there are ways it can come in handy in a person’s professional career.

Facebook lets job seekers tap an informal network of friends or friends of friends who can be instrumental in creating employment success.

- **URL**: www.facebook.com

- **Background**: Hugely popular; more than 1.11 billion users worldwide.

- **General Description**: The world’s largest social media site.

- **Usefulness to Job-Hunters**: Facebook lets a job seeker sign up on pages devoted to job-hunting and careers. In addition, Facebook has an app that enables a job seeker to hunt for people who work at a particular company or organization, or who share a particular interest of theirs.

- **Disability.gov on Facebook** is the U.S. federal government’s online source for comprehensive information about disability-related programs, services and benefits. **URL**: https://www.facebook.com/Disability.gov/info
Parts of the Job Search Process

Interviewing

The interviewer wants to know what an interviewee did and how he or she did it. If one is not prepared for these types of questions, a person will not do well in the interview. Interviewees must be prepared for before arriving. The purpose of a job interview is for a person and an employer to gain knowledge of each other.

Employers want to evaluate a candidate’s qualifications and a candidate wants to evaluate the employers (CareerOneStop, 2014). When an individual gets an interview, this usually means they have been selected out of a small group of individuals who have been selected for a position. The decision about who will get the job will then be based on whom the interviewers believe will be the best fit for their organization/company. Moreover, most employers base their decisions on who is the best candidate for the position, usually the person best prepared for the interview gets the job (Ryan, 2011). According to Marquez (2014), interviewees will have to respond to questions about their skills, abilities, and how they will perform in situations on the job by giving examples demonstrating their skills and abilities and teamwork.

How do individuals with disabilities interview with a potential employer? First, they should conducted research about a potential future employer and the job they are trying to fill (Bolles & Brown, 2001). It is imperative to know what duties, experience, credentials, and competencies are required to fulfill the job. Both Ryan (2011) and
Lovejoy (2014) recommended a few tips an individual with a disability may want to consider before entering a job interview to build confidence and eliminate anxieties:

1. Rehearse for the Interview: Allow plenty of time to rehearse your presentation before a job interview. Rehearsing builds confidence and helps your job interview go smoothly. Practice speaking the messages you plan to deliver during the interview — such as a listing of your five top skills, how you will answer questions, and how you will ask questions.

2. Research Yourself: Finding information about yourself online is as easy as conducting a Google search. Although there is very little that can be done to control accurate information on an interviewer’s social life, steps can be taken to limit inaccurate information. It’s best to make sure that interviewer’s online profiles are professional, current, and not controversial.

3. Prepare how to answer questions regarding a physical disability: Although ADA laws prohibit employers from asking about a disability in a job interview, if a disability is visible, it is best to address it early in the interview and point out that it will not impact the ability to perform the functions of the job. This is the best way to get the employers attention focused on their primary concern-on the candidate’s ability to do the job.
4. Prepare how to answer questions regarding a mental disability: If a
disability is not visible to the interviewer, it is up to the interviewee to
decide if they want to disclose it. (Ryan, 2011, p. 209)

In most cases, applicants wait until an offer is extended to disclose their disability. Bolles (2013) conducted various studies around interviewing for a job and provided key tips about interviewing to be successful at obtaining a job:

- An interview at best is just a conversation: This conversation is between two people who want to decide if they want to go steady. Depending on how many individuals join the panel, or sit in on the interview, it should only be a two-way conversation to find out more about your skills, work ethic, knowledge, and experience.

- During the interview, use the 50-50 rule: Half the time during the interview let the employer talk while the interviewee talks the other half. People who engage in too much conversation with potential employers come across as one who would ignore the needs of the organization. However, if a potential employee talks too little, they come across as trying to hide something about their background, or having researched minimal information about the organization.

- Observe the 20-second to 2-minute rule when answering questions in an interview: Studies show that when it is the interviewee’s turn to answer a question, speaking longer than 2 minutes makes the best impression on
employers. However, when answering a question, speaking less than 20-seconds give the employer the impression of a “grunter” who lacks communication skills.

- **Dress for success and maintain self-confidence:** Studies reveal that dressing appropriately for the job wearing professional clothes such as slacks, dress shoes, button up shirt and ties, revealed that candidates for a job interview are more likely to get the job and instill self-confidence. However, lacking self-confidence in general is a massive turnoff for many employers. So, it’s best to speak clearly, give answers in an orderly fashion, don’t interrupt interviewers, and feel confident about your abilities to perform essential functions of the job.

- **Do not worry about your past, employers only ask about it to predict future behavior:** Although legally, employers cannot ask about things such as your disability, race, age, sexual orientation, other questions about your past are fair game.

- **However, when confronted about past troubled issues, it is best to ignore the fear behind the question and get the point across about the positive aspects of your life.** (pp. 12-13)

**The Resume and Cover Letter**

Job seekers’ duties are to prove their skills to employers, but job seekers with disabilities have to work harder to win over the employer (Balderrama, 2011). A major
misconception employers have about hiring people with disabilities is that the job candidate will be incompetent and unable to perform specific functions of their job. This is a common concern employers have in hiring employees, but it seems more common in hiring individuals with physical disabilities (Balderrama, 2011). It would be best for an individual with a disability to be careful and not share too much information with the employer (DeLuca & DeLuca, 2010). The primary purpose of a resume is to reach out to employers and get invited for an interview (Bolles, 2013).

A resume is used as a screening device, not a selection device. A job seeker’s resume is a brief document summarizing his or her education, employment history, and experience to showcase their qualifications to employers of interest. Research shows it takes an average of 10 interviews to receive one job offer, so building a resume that is persuasive, perfect, and user-centered is highly recommended for success in a job interview opportunity (The Purdue Owl, 2014.)

Resumes successfully work attaining an interview with an employer only 7% of the time (Bolles, 2013). Therefore, a well-written resume and cover letter is critical to the numbers game of the job market, as many employers will receive several hundred for any given position. Still, if a candidate has the qualifications and the background the employer is looking for, a clear and concise resume will help them at least get invited to a phone interview (Ryan, 2011).

The Disability Job Exchange (2014) provides resume and cover letter tips for individuals with disabilities. If a person chooses to be completely transparent and
discloses their disability, the following are some things to consider when writing a resume and cover letter. The resume should be centered on skills, strengths, and experience, just like for any other job candidate.

- If a candidate has not been employed without breaks, it is best to develop a functional resume. Functional resumes highlight work experience and skills instead of a chronological listing of work history.
- References will benefit a job candidate and should be included at the end of a resume. Past work experience is a testament to a candidate’s future work product, and providing employers with access to past employers will help outline their ability to perform the job regardless of disability status.
- If a job candidate is a member of outside organizations associated with individuals with disabilities, make a determination to include these organizations or include a list of affiliations that showcase a broader range of experience.

Also, according to Ryan (2011), there are many components to a resume, depending on the background and requirements of the position. He has laid out important aspects of a resume in terms of what employers are seeking.

**Vital statistics.**

- The most important information should be located at the top of the resume (name, address, e-mail, phone number).
• An e-mail address should be a professional one. If the job seeker does not have one, create one, as silly e-mail addresses will send a resume to the trash.

• Having a URL to a webpage can add significant value to a resume; hence, a perspective employer may be able to access a more detailed resume, autobiography, and portfolio if necessary.

**Objective and qualifications.**

• Always include a cover letter that elaborates fully on a career objective.

• Include a brief objective statement on actual resume.

• Avoid objective pitfalls such as providing vague job titles or career goals in a resume (Ryan, 2011).

**Qualifications summary.**

• Use a short paragraph or bulleted list that summarizes and highlights accomplishments, skills, and characteristics that are most important to the job. (e.g., number years of experience, industry worked in, areas of expertise, and what technical skills are possessed).

• Put education on a resume right after the objective. If a person has graduated from a college or institute, it is best to leave out high school information.

• For individuals with disabilities who took longer to complete their education, it is best to list the year you graduated. However, do not list the years attended. Some employers may make assumptions as to why a future
employee has taken so long to get a degree. The accomplishment is what counts, not how long it has taken to achieve it (Ryan, 2011).

- **Experience.**

- Think broadly in terms of the experience a job candidate has by not just including full- or part-time paid employment; internships and volunteer experiences are worth including. If the internship or volunteer experience is related to the type of job, change the heading to “Related Experience.”

- If job applications state the applicant must list job experience in chronological order, do it. However, if not stated, include all experience relevant to the position; this will give you the opportunity to point out these facts without using a lot of space on cover letter and resume to describe it.

- Try to use high-power, action words to describe accomplishments; this can add a little punch to a resume by bringing accomplishments to life and making them stand out.

- If the job candidate possesses military experience that irrelevant to the employer, point out their service record (e.g., leadership, teamwork, discipline), as these skills are in high demand in the workforce and are very difficult to acquire (Ryan, 2011).

Ryan (2011) gives potential job seekers some tips on a few common words that can destroy a resume:
• “Salary Negotiable”: Do not put this on a resume. Most employers will have this on their job application. If put on a resume, it seems the job seeker is padding their resume and has run out of things to talk about.

• “Responsible for___”: Employers usually read this term and picture an uninspired employee mechanically fulfilling their job requirements-no more, no less. Being responsible for something is something that happened to the job candidate, not something they did. Use words such as “managed,” “led,” or other decisive string verbs.

• “Team Player”: There are few jobs that involve working with other individuals in the workforce. Instead, use relevant success stories on a resume, talk about the kinds of teams they worked on, and how they succeeded.

**Cover letters.**

• Do not open up a cover letter with the status of a disability, rather, focus on skills and work experience.

• Outline strengths and accomplishments – these should be the central theme of any cover letter, regardless of disability or other job status.

• If a job candidate is addressing any physical limitations, outline solutions for the employer. For instance, if there is an issue with a visual impairment and they can quickly address it, an accommodation can be made.
• If possible, provide examples of how a job candidate has performed with past employers.

• Discuss opportunities employers provide by hiring employees with disabilities. If the job candidate knows the employer is focused on hiring disabled workers, highlight this fact.

**Informational Interviewing**

What is an informational interview? An informational interview is talking with people about their jobs and careers to gain information and advice. The term was coined by (Bolles, 2011), the author of What Color Is Your Parachute? The informational interview communicates the first-hand experiences and impressions of someone in the occupation and is directed by an applicant’s questions. It presents opportunities for an open and flexible view of a job, which is unmatched by other sources.

Informational interviews give an individual knowledge as well as networking contacts applicants can use to ask for information about jobs (Lock, 2005). However, it can be a very useful tool in preparing for an authentic job interview (University of California Santa Cruz Career Center, 2012). When a job seeker is seeking information on a career and what it is really like to perform the daily duties and functions, the best source of information is someone who is actually in that job. These individuals can provide much information and can add dimension to the information (Ryan, 2011).

Informational Interviews involve knowing which type of job fits a candidate’s career aspirations. Speaking with individuals about their jobs and asking them for advice
is termed an Informational Interview (Lock, 2005). Informational Interviewing is an influential tool in the job search but, more importantly, it is a strategy to use when exploring career fields that interest the consumer. A typical informational interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes. This type of meeting is for information gathering only; it is not to be used as an employment interview. However, in order for a job seeker to receive full benefit from their visit, they are urged to prepare for it as they would an interview by:

- Bringing a resume
- Maintaining professional etiquette
- Review all available materials related to the field
- Prepare a list of relevant questions
- Be prepared to discuss your interests and abilities as they relate to this field.
- The day before an informational interview, confirm your appointment
- Arrive and leave on time
- Follow the visit with a brief Thank You note

**Mentoring**

One of the great benefits of networking in the job search process is the possibility of finding a mentor (Bolles, 2013). Finding an individual who has the same career interests and practical experience can often greatly benefit a job seeker (Yeager, 2008). Mentoring is a one-on-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a
Mentorships are promoted for individuals with disabilities for all the same reasons they are promoted for other individuals, such as for learning from positive role models, addressing additional needs of individuals with disabilities, and offering guidance in navigating the experiences of individuals with disabilities (Stumbo, 2011).

According to Ryan (2011) several types of mentors can be of particular value for an individual with a disability:

- **Individuals without Disabilities in a similar Field**: This type of individual will be able to give a person an inside look at the day-to-day work in their particular field. This individual can give a historical perspective on the field in terms of where he or she sees the field going in the future.

- **Individuals with Similar Disabilities in a Similar Field**: Someone who has prospered in the same chosen career can be the greatest mentor. This type of mentor will be able to help an individual on many fronts. Most importantly, this individual will be able to share a wealth of information and knowledge about the ways in which his or her disability has affected them on the job. These individuals may be in a position to give a job seeker a feel for what accommodations might be necessary and appropriate in the workplace. This information can be tremendously invaluable to a consumer as they interview for positions in the field.
• Individuals with Similar Disabilities in a Different Field: Those with disabilities can network with other disabled individuals. Although the disabilities may vary, when networking they may be able to share opinions on issues such as how and when to disclose a disability during the job process. This individual may also be aware of valuable resources for a person with a specific type of disability. It is important to network with employers, college staff, mentors, educators, and community organization leaders, and seek assistance with work placement opportunities. (pp. 122-124)

Summary

The first section reviewed literature about the benefits of Job Clubs for job seekers. The second section was the historical perspective for veterans with disabilities. The third section reviewed literature provided by Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports and Federal Code Manual Revised M28R and provided a comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation. The final sections provided literature on networking and social media, steps toward the job search process, the resume and cover letters, informational interviewing, and mentoring disabled veterans seeking suitable employment. These sections also address current methods of the job search process, including information on how to maximize the hiring potential of individuals with disabilities.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Review of Sources

In preparing this project, the author read books and performed library research through EBSCO, ERIC, Google Scholar, PROQUEST, and U.S.gov, the government web portal from which the author reviewed several peer-reviewed articles. The author gathered these peer-reviewed articles from the Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, the Journal of Employment Counseling, Vocational Rehabilitation, Journal of Science Education for Students with Disabilities, and the Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation. The majority of the reviewed articles were about vocational employment strategies for veterans with disabilities. From the peer-reviewed articles gathered, the author focused on information pertaining to veterans with disabilities, vocational employment strategies, and vocational rehabilitation services, which included information on federal and state vocational rehabilitation services and a variety of internet resources.

In addition to the various material discussed, the author retrieved information from Federal Regulation Manuals for Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment services (VR&E), the Occupational outlook handbook, and the U.S. Veterans Resources Handbook.

The reference publication the author also utilized is the California Vocational Tool Kit (1994) by Peter Brock. This publication provided the following:

- Guidance in setting goals to identify specific job interests
• Organizational skills
• Methods for conducting research on potential employers
• Assistance in analyzing job announcements as well as ads for critical information to better match qualifications with the employers’ needs
• A step-by-step guide of methods used
• Application analyses
• Evaluation of resumes to ensure effectiveness, and
• A translation of military experiences into job attaining services and development.

The final resource for this project came from the *Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Masters Project Handbook* (Ortman, 2009), which provided the organization and guidelines for the vocational rehabilitation toolkit.

The author also collected pertinent information about veterans with disabilities, vocational employment strategies, and suitable outcomes from personal interviews with Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and staff from the DVA VR&E services. Additionally, the author conducted interviews with veterans who had received services through VR&E. The interviews were conducted from September 2013 throughout November 2014. The individuals interviewed were listed as Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (SVRC), Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Assistant of VR&E Officer, and Educational and Research Professors.
Method

The process for completing this project began in Fall 2013. The author began volunteer services at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Office (VR&E) in Sacramento, California. While performing as an unpaid work-study employee, the author had access to working with veterans applying for and receiving vocational rehabilitation services for veterans with service connected disabilities. The author interviewed and interacted with an array of veterans seeking employment and vocational rehabilitation services.

While completing unpaid work study, the author discussed some possible topics with a variety of senior and vocational counselors around the VR&E, Sacramento office that he could use to complete his graduate project. The author then consulted Dr. Norman Corson, Assistant VR&E Officer, about those topics for completion of his masters degree graduate project in the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling program at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). Throughout the fall semester, the author and Dr. Corson determined that the author could perform his project on vocational employment strategies for veterans with disabilities. Dr. Corson also indicated to the author that there was a need to update the “California Vocational Rehabilitation Toolkit: A Worker’s Guide to Successful Vocational Rehabilitation in California with Tips for Winning the Right Job and Thriving the Rest of Your Working Life” (1994) and that he would get an opportunity to utilize many of the skills he was learning in the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
The author began to gather, as well as analyze, Federal Regulation Manuals for VR&E services, peer-reviewed articles, and the Veterans Resources Handbook that revealed the various challenges veterans face when it comes to vocational employment strategies. The author continued to gather research articles from the Department of Labor regarding veterans with disabilities vocational employment strategies and suitable outcomes during fall 2012 and into fall 2014. The author then submitted a proposal in fall 2012 to the advisor of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling program, Dr. Guy E. Deaner, for approval.

After receiving approval from the author’s graduate adviser to officially start his graduate project on the topic presented, the author consulted Dr. Corson for additional information and guidance. Dr. Corson also suggested the author contact the graduate studies librarian for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and LeMarcus A. Malone and Renee Brewer, past graduates from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at California State University, Sacramento, for guidance with finding vocational employment strategies for veterans with disabilities.

On September 14, 2012, the author performed his first interview with Dr. Norman Corson. Subsequent to this informational interview with Dr. Corson, the author asked about the overall mission, goal, and future vocational models of the Department of Veterans Affairs, VR&E in Northern California, the longevity of vocational rehabilitation counselors in the federal government, and improvements needed. Dr. Corson acknowledged that the publication he mentioned had not been updated in over 20 years
and that, since 1994, Internet development has changed the whole process of posting employment availabilities for employers seeking employees. The author and Dr. Corson agreed and recognized the necessary need for updating the process and toolkit in order to improve veterans’ opportunities and vocational employment strategies for suitable employment outcomes.

On April 8, 2014, the author had a group discussion with 15 veterans about the various strategies that had and had not worked for them, along with an introduction of the Vet Success Program. The 15 veterans mentioned that past strategies within Vet Success had not worked for them. Particularly regarding filling out federal job application forms and taking employment tests, writing effective resumes to overcome employment barriers, or how to translate military experience into the civilian job market.

During the information interview, Mr. Rapoza mentioned the mission statement and the future of the Department of Veteran affairs, VR&E, Sacramento office. He acknowledged improvements for veterans with disabilities and improvements in the area of computer technology were necessary. Mr. Rapoza further stated the primary needs in computer technology were personalized computer training, software upgrades, and client protection software.

On February 3, 2014, the author preformed an information interview with Mr. Mark Frayser. He mentioned the State of California provides an abundance of resources for veterans with disabilities that went unused. Mr. Frayser suggested that while providing service to veterans with disabilities, the author refer veterans to the DOR
website (www.cador.gov) for the mission statement and purpose of rehabilitation services available for persons with disabilities as well as local resources.

On April 17, 2014, the author conducted a literature review with Jan Rollings-Rapoza, SVRC. She suggested the author explore VR&E training modules M28R to obtain further information on outcomes of veterans with disabilities seeking suitable employment after VR&E delivery of services. She indicated the information obtained could be placed in the project and could offer additional strategies for veterans seeking employment. On January 8, 2014, the author met with Mr. LeMarcus A. Malone, VRC, for an interview and discussed his views of the VR&E process, strategies, and employment outcomes. Additional contacts were made with him throughout the development of the toolkit.
Chapter 4
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This project was developed to provide veterans with disabilities employment strategies to obtain successful employment in today's workforce. The DVA, VR&E services support veterans seeking vocational rehabilitation service and employment. Overall, veterans seeking services from DVA, VR&E are in great need of updated methods and strategies to gain entrance into the employment world. A written toolkit from 1994 is outdated and lacks the resources and tools veterans must use to enhance the quality of the job search process.

The toolkit in this project will serve as a resource for veterans to use during the job search process. It contains steps for all areas of the job search process. The review of literature began discussing the present day need for effective vocational rehabilitation services to service connected veterans with disabilities. This followed with a brief historical review of the evolution of vocational rehabilitation services provided to U.S. Military veterans over the years.

The author reviewed federal, state, and private organizations that provide vocational rehabilitation services to veterans looking for the best methods used to serve veterans with disabilities within the organizations. Websites and articles related to the job search process were also reviewed. The review of literature concluded with peer-reviewed journal articles that focused on the special vocational rehabilitation needs of
present day U.S. military veterans with disabilities and vocational rehabilitation counseling approaches to use with veterans with disabilities. Today, employers use electronic applications and correspondence methods. The new toolkit includes new methods applied in the job search process: electronic application filling, networking through social media, job clubs and, personal contact/networking techniques.

**Recommendations**

The author recommends the information included in this toolkit be updated on an ongoing basis and be provided in a vocational rehabilitation counselor workshop. The VRC focused workshop will be facilitated by the Employment Coordinator (EC) once every 6 months. Furthermore, clients who complete Vocation Rehabilitation Services will be invited to participate in the workshop, which will mainly be focused on the client's needs and strategies in the toolkit. The purpose of the workshop is to increase overall outcomes of veterans seeking suitable employment. It offers an opportunity for the veteran to review job leads, have assistance in writing effective resumes and cover letters.

The ECs can review resumes and provide suggestions. The workshop should offer an opportunity for veterans to share their job searching experience together to break down any barriers he or she has faced while seeking employment. Since the vocational needs of veterans continue to change as their life circumstance change, the toolkit can help in areas that need expanding. Other recommendations are for VR&E professional to engage in additional training to continue to remain current on topics of concern. The
VR&E professional staff can revise the toolkit periodically as they obtain new knowledge for increasing suitable outcomes for veterans with disabilities.

The author further recommends the toolkit be given to all service connected individual with disabilities upon completion of the (VR&E). Finally, VR&E needs additional staff members to increase suitable outcomes of veterans with disabilities seeking employment.
Appendix

VETERAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TOOLKIT
VETERAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TOOLKIT
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Introduction

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) services, support and provide employment assistance for disabled veterans seeking employment. Nevertheless, veterans at the VR&E are in need of employment skills and knowledge of the job search process to gain entrance into the employment world. The Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Tool Kit is intended to provide information to you, the veterans with a service-connected disability, about the key features of the job search process in continuing the advancement of delivery of services to increase these outcomes.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report January 14, 2014 veterans with disabilities face special challenges gaining suitable employment--resulting, for example, from the veterans' physical or mental health, or negative attitudes or stereotypes on the part of some employers. This report acknowledge gaps in training for VR&E staff, and recognized gaps in the area of job placement assistance / Job Ready Status (JRS) veterans with disabilities. This Tool Kit will provide steps in the job search process to assistance veterans with disabilities close the gap in area of job placement.

This tool kit will aid you in seeking employment with job search strategies and approaches, an overview using USAJOBS, development of resumes, interview techniques, phone interview preparation and effective listening skills. Further providing you rewarding information on the significant variances due to the numerous laws, executive orders, and regulations that oversee federal and state employment.
Figure A1. S.M.A.R.T Diagram

- Specific
- Measurable
- Realistic
- Adaptable
- Time
S.M.A.R.T

*SMART*: is one of the many acronyms known to assist veterans with job search or career goals and help to design career plans.

**Principles**

✓ **Specific**—Targets a specific area for improvement.

✓ **Measurable**—Quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.

✓ **Adaptable**—Specify who will do it.

✓ **Realistic**—States what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.

✓ **Time-related**—specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

**Specific**

The *Specific* principle stresses the need for you to set a *specific* goal. This means the goal is clear and explicit. If your drive and passion is not as strong it is possible that you will not have a firm plan of how to get that job. When striving for the *specifics* in your employment goal perform a lot of research and be as clear enough so that your research can assist you in seeking suitable employment.

**Measurable**

The *Measurable* principle stresses the need for solid criteria for measuring progress in the direction to attainment of the goal. Develop a realistic, daily/weekly time frame. This provides you the opportunity to measure whether or not you are consistent in your employment search activities.
**Adaptable**

The *Adaptable* principle stresses the need for setting an employment goal which is comparable to using a road map with numerous possibilities. When setting *Adaptable* principles your approach should be realistic in nature as well as use an array of alternative methods that will assist in achieving your employment destination. You can modify your search process, employment preference, the salary you want, or the hours you are available to work.

**Realistic**

The *Realistic* principle stresses the need to ensure the goal is practical, results-oriented and within the employer's realm of authority and capabilities. For example, labor markets for chosen employment goals, in addition to local economies and labor markets. *Realistic* goals are goals that are reachable within a measureable amount according to the individual’s needs.

**Time-Related**

The *Time-Related* principle stresses the significance of fixed goals within a timetable including target dates for accomplishments. Target dates have several milestones or check points to aid you in your job search. Job seekers who have not established a set of target date or time frame usually have no sense of urgency or reason to take specific actions towards achieving the set goal.
Employment Research

In order to narrow down your occupational goals and employment possibilities you must answer a few questions about yourself. It is important to know what you want to do and how well your abilities, interest, and skills line up with the expectations of the job; therefore, one should identify the steps involved in a successful job search. Consider the following questions before you begin your search:

- What are your abilities, interests, skills and education requirements for the job that I want? (Identify requirements and constraints.)
- Why do I want to work in the field I selected? (Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.)
- Identify your Occupational goals. Example: (Security Guard).
- Keep your goals sensible. If you do not keep your goals practical you can become discouraged.
- Research the labor market for information on wages and employment trends.
- Review the particular geographical location by zip code, county and state and be willing to modify if needed.

Use Table A1 as a guide to ensure the key points above are addressed.
Table A1

Occupational Tracking Guide

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<td>Security Guard</td>
<td>$24,020 per year</td>
<td>High school diploma or AA Degree</td>
<td>Enjoy protecting others</td>
<td>State, City, and Zip code</td>
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Online Job Search

The online job search process has reshaped the traditional methods applied in the past as the main source for application review by hiring managers. Seeking employment online is a time consuming process. It takes commitment and organization to ensure suitable outcomes. However, the internet has made the job search convenient for job seekers and improved the efficiency of hiring managers.

When viewing data online you should select specific occupations that you want to accomplish in employment. You will have a much greater chance of being successful in doing so rather than having a broad goal. Searching for jobs online can be very complicated and tedious if you do not have a good starting point. Therefore, when it
comes to researching employment opportunities online try to make it easier on yourself. By getting to know some of the major online employment resources and tools available can make this task easier and less stressful.

As adapted from “Winning the Employment Game” by Hodenfield (2006), below are some leading internet resources to assist you in obtaining employment information providing job openings, occupational trends, salary information, and employer profiles:

- **Caljobs** (for employment trends in California)  [www.caljobs.ca.gov](http://www.caljobs.ca.gov)
- **Career Builder**  [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)
- **USAJOBS**  [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
- **Student jobs**  [www.studentjobs.org](http://www.studentjobs.org)
- **Monster.com**  [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)
- **Indeed**  [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)
- **Simply Hired**  [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com)
- **UAB Career & Professional Development Industry Specific Job Search Sites.**  [www.uab.edu/careerservices/industry-specific-job-search](http://www.uab.edu/careerservices/industry-specific-job-search)
- **Quintessential Careers**  [www.quintcareers.com/professional_organizations.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/professional_organizations.html)

When conducting employment research online narrow your search down to your specific profession and use search engines such as www.indeed.com. You can find full-
and-part-time local opportunities in a variety of career fields. By reviewing local newspapers classified sections for employment/job listings or online, it can increase your knowledge in available employment opportunities. Here is a listing of a few newspapers that you can use to identify the available employment opportunities in your local area such as: Sacramento Bee, Stockton Record, and San Francisco Chronicle, to name a few.

If you do not have a computer readily available to you, go to your local library or, your local Employment Development Department (EDD) office to use a computer and obtain information about employment opportunities. Other places to consider for computers access while seeking employment are: One Stop career centers, Work Net Employment Center and local community colleges and universities.

**Time Management**

While carrying out a job search, managing your time can be either your greatest enemy or friend. So practice using every moment of every day wisely. Prepare a job search schedule that resembles a regular 9 am-5pm, Monday-Friday work routine. Spend part of your day researching companies online, e-mailing and networking with individuals in your desired labor market. Furthermore, conduct agency or agencies research such as the application process, hiring process, employment locations, available shifts, salaries and benefits just to name a few. Below is an illustration of a time management schedule.
Table A2

Time Management Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00am</td>
<td>Search internet and want ads</td>
<td>Make personal visits or interviews</td>
<td>Search internet and want ads</td>
<td>Phone calls, applications or inquiries</td>
<td>Phone calls, applications or inquiries</td>
<td>Search internet and want ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Networking calls</td>
<td>Phone Calls</td>
<td>Letters/ Applications</td>
<td>Letters/ Applications</td>
<td>Letters/ Applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Letters/ Applications</td>
<td>Follow up</td>
<td>Follow up</td>
<td>Admin. Tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00pm</td>
<td>Letters, phone calls or interviews</td>
<td>Letter/ Applications</td>
<td>Search for new prospects—visit library to read professional magazines</td>
<td>Make personal visits to employment agencies</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Prepare weekly schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phone calls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow ups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00pm</td>
<td>Admin. Tasks</td>
<td>Admin. Tasks</td>
<td>Admin. Tasks</td>
<td>Admin. Tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00pm</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Create a Job Search Tracking System

Build a Job Search Tracking System an effective method to track your job search process. Create a detailed outlining with key aspects of your job search process that can help you maintain organization throughout the job search process.

Key aspects to include: retain

- **Company Name** - The name of the organization you're applying to.
- **Contact** - Your point of contact at the company; probably who you addressed your cover letter to, such as a Director of Human Resources or Office Manager.
- **Email** - The email of your point of contact, or, if preferred, a phone number.
- **Date Applied** - When you submitted your application.
- **Notes to track your job search** - You'll need a system to monitor which companies and positions you've applied to and the status of each application and when to make follow up contact, dates/times of interviews, names of people to network and weekly or monthly goals.

Below is an illustration of how to organization to your job tracking process.
After your job search log look into alternative methods that will assist you in achieving your desired employment. One way would be to modify your methods according to employer's objective outlined in their job listing. Potential employer will specify skills, interests, and abilities required to obtain employment. Adapt according to the employment preference will enhance your chances to obtain employment. Minor adjustments to your salary or the hours you are available to work can assist you in achieving your employment destination.

**Approaching Your Federal Job Search**

The first thing a job seeker must do is to create an online account at USAJOBS.gov. When setting up your account, you'll need to include information on your
career interests, the type of job you want to obtain and maintain, the required experience and education, and the geographical location of the job. Upon the completion of your account set up, the USAJOBS will evaluate jobs posted to its site and will email you postings that match your skills and background. Some things to consider is that employer’s want the hiring process to be easy and efficient so be accurate.

Exactly how do you approach the USAJOB job search process? One key component in approaching the job search process is ensuring you are organized. The primary method to apply for federal employment is online at USAJOBS.gov. To do so requires you the veteran to establish an account on USAJOBS.gov. Then click onto the CREATE AN ACCOUNT link in the upper right hand corner of the screen to create a NEW user account.
Fill in the information on the new account page.

Check work to ensure you have completed the required information that is marked with a red asterisk.

The USAJOBS account page requires for the individual to have an email address however if you do not have an email you will have to open a free email account on either aol.com, google.com, hotmail.com or yahoo.com just to name a few.
** Note: you can also use your military e-mail account if necessary and make sure you click the text radial button. This will scan for the odd characters and eliminate them from any correspondence.

While creating a new user account for USAJOBS you also create a USER NAME. The USERNAME can be anything you wish. If you want it to be Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck be mindful that it will identified in the same manner in APPLICATION MANAGER (the APPLICATION MANAGER dislikes the period between the names). After creating the USERNAME you will also be prompted to create a secure PASSWORD.
The PASSWORD that you create has to be unique and can be anything you like however there be mindful that the same password would be used in APPLICATION MANAGER, but there are certain characters the system dislikse such as “?”, “!” and other special charters so you should avoid using them when creating a password.

After creating a PASSWORD you must also select a security questions as well as provide the answer. Remember the answers to the security questions are case sensitive.
Scroll to the bottom of the page and to the Terms and Conditions Statement”. Click on the “I AGREE” and “Create my account” button to complete activation of your USA JOBS account.

Now that you have successfully CREATED your USA JOBS account. You will need to create a PROFILE. In order to create your PROFILE you will need to click the EDIT PROFILE button. As you EDIT your PROFILE, you will be required to fill in all RED ASTERICK required field in order to proceed with this process. When you have
completed all of the RED ASTERICK required fields, you will need to press next to proceed. DON’T worry after pressing the NEXT button your work has been SAVED.

*NOTE: If you need to exit this process and return you can pick back up where you left off and continue the process.

![Image of USAJOBS profile page]

After completing this section you will need to fill out your personal preference in the PROFILE section. This section includes CITY/TOWN, STATE and TELEPHONE Number to name a few. Don’t forget to press the SAVE button at the bottom of the page.
As you complete the PERSONAL PREFERENCE section press the NEXT button to complete.

After completing the PERSONAL PREFERENCE section you will need to fill out the Hiring Eligibility section of the PROFILE section. This section includes CITIZENSHIP and SELECTION SERVICE status to name a few. Don’t forget to press the SAVE and NEXT button at the bottom of the page.
Profile


Please note: Please enter the required fields.

The following information is mandatory: if you want to receive a notice on the completion of the application.

Do not include the following types of information in your profile or resume: classified information, as defined in Executive Order 13526 (effective December 24, 2009), Social Security number (SSN), or other personal or sensitive information you do not wish to make visible to reviewers.

The following Hiring Eligibility Questions will help you determine if you are eligible for competitive or non-competitive jobs with the government:

1. Are you a U.S. Citizen?
   - Yes
   - No
   If you answered No to the above question, please provide your country of citizenship.
   - Country of citizenship: Afghanistan

2. Select the statement that best applies to your Selective Service registration status:
   - I am a female, and therefore I am exempt from registering with the Selective Service.
   - I am a male born on or after January 1, 1990 and I have registered for the Selective Service.
   - I am a male born on or after January 1, 1990, and I have not registered for the Selective Service, but I have an approved exemption.
   - I am a male born on or after January 1, 1990, and I have not registered for the Selective Service.
   - I am a male born before January 1, 1990 and therefore I am exempt from registering with the Selective Service.

3. Are you a veteran or are you eligible for Vetras?
As a part of the HIRING ELIGIBILITY on the Profile page there are several questions that will be addressed …this section will cover QUESTION 3. This question is a Veterans question. The VETERAN question asks if you if you have Veteran's Preference. This is where you will be able to upload your Defense Department (DD)-214 and the Standard Form-15 Application for Veteran's Preference. If you are a veteran and have earned those points then answer this question. If you are not claiming Veteran's Preference then just click “no”. Proceed by Pressing the SAVE and NEXT buttons.
In this section, HIRING Eligibility, Question 4 inquires about your FEDERAL EMPLOYEES STATUS. This questions asks if you are or ever have been a Federal Employee. If you have never been a Federal Employee, answer “no”, scroll down to the bottom of page and proceed to the next question by pressing SAVE and then NEXT buttons. If you answer “yes” then additional questions will appear.

*NOTE: Questions 4-1 through 4-5 of the HIRING ELIGIBILITY section are questions that are mainly for current and past federal employees.
In this section of HIRING Eligibility, 4-1 asks for you to select the DEPARTMENT that you are or were federally employed in the drop down menu. This reflects your current or past federal employment. This is where you will identify the CABINET LEVEL or DEPARTMENT in which you are or were employed such as the DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION or even DEPARTMENT of LABOR.

Continue on with the HIRING Eligibility Question 4-1, section two. This sections asks for you to identify the AGNECY in which you are currently or were employed. For example under the DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE there are several agencies that fall
under this CABINET LEVEL or DEPARTMENT. One of the agencies that could be
selected under this department is Joint Activities; AMC, Headquarters, 1st Personnel
Command or Surgeon General just to name a few.
Continuing in the HIRING Eligibility of Question 4-3, asks for you to select the pay plan, series, grade level as well as the highest grade level that you have obtained as a FEDERAL employee. In the drop down menu please select the pay plan, series and grade level for example: GS/WG, Cabinet Level- Department of Energy followed by your Occupational Series 0210 Human Resources Management.
Now in this section of HIRING ELIGIBILITY, Question 4-4 asks you to select your occupation series code. You can locate this series code on your Standard Form (SF) 50. After entering you series code proceed to question 4-5. If you cannot locate your Occupation Series Code, you will need to contact the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for additional assistance. Questions 4-5 addresses whether you accepted any buyouts while employed as a federal employee. If your response to this question is “no” proceed to the next section. If your response is “yes” you must address the additional questions.
In your Profile, you have tab which addresses your PREFERENCES. This tab is located after HIRING ELIGIBILITY section. This is where you will address your PREFERENCES such as: If you are willing to travel? The frequently of travel monthly? What type of work are you willing to accept? After answering the preference questions proceed to the next question by pressing SAVE and then NEXT at the bottom of the page.
In this next section, there will be an array of preference questions covered. After answering the preference questions proceed to the next question by pressing SAVE and then NEXT at the bottom of the page.
The next section of the PROFILE is DEMOGRAPHICS. This section will ask an array of questions pertaining to demographics information, sex, race and ethnicity. After answering the preference questions proceed to the next question by pressing SAVE and then NEXT at the bottom of the page.
The section of the PROFILE page addresses the ACCOUNT INFORMATION. This section covers your NOTIFICATION SETTINGS for your USA JOBS account. This section of the profile notifies you of any vacancy announcements that you selected in your range and other specifications. Don’t forget to press SAVE and then NEXT at the bottom of the page after answering notification setting questions.

Hooray! Now your USAJOBS PROFILE is FINISHED. Press SAVE and then FINISH at the bottom of the page.
Resumes

There are 2 types of resumes that are used in the process of seeking employment. These resumes are known as chronological and functional resumes. Depending on the employers’ requirements, skills, aptitudes, and education, resumes are changing upon employment trends and availability in the areas of employment.

Chronological Resume

The chronological resume in the job search process is the most popular format. The chronological resume organizes the various employment details by dates ranging from the most current to the oldest. A chronological resume is considered to be an ideal option for individuals with a significant work history, but can be used by individuals who are new to the work force or who have not previously held distinguished positions.

Chronological resumes are used for employers in traditional industries, when individual have a steady employment history. Chronological resumes are mainly used when you want to demonstrate a career progression. When to avoid using on chronological resumes is when there are career gaps or lacking experience in the area in which you are applying. An example of a chronological resume follows.
Chronological Resume (Sample)

Kenneth Walker  
2929 Mount Hood Avenue  
Never home, CA 98765  
(209) 123-4567  
Kenneth_Walker @ gmai.com

Objectives: Seeking a position as a Transportation Security Specialist

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

• Government Confidential Security Clearance
• Superior performance award for four years in security management
• Meritorious Promoted to E-5
• Able to work under stressful situations

EXPERIENCE

19XX-20XX  Boatswain mate  
Supervised and evaluated a crew 50 personal work with logic operations  
Monitored security on board ship and pier side as Security officer  
Experienced in handle confidential material

Certified EMT/ Firefighter  
Navy Recruiter

19XX-20XX  Downtown Auto Center, Oakland, CA
Sales Manager
Loan Officer
Managed a sells team of 10 sell man and woman with the sale of new and used cars  
Purchased used cars at car auction

EDUCATION

US Navy  Security, Firefighter, Leadership, Logistics, and EMT Training
San Joaquin Delta College  AA Degree in Psychology  Stockton, CA
University of the Pacific  BA Degree in Sociology  Stockton, CA
**Functional Resume**

A functional resume emphasis more on the skills you have attained rather than a listing of positions you have acquired. Functional resumes commonly highlight a few key points of experience and list responsibilities and accomplishments for each experience field. These skill groups must be specific and filled with plenty of context, as well as identify the jobs you are applying for. You may want to contemplate a functional resume if you are a new graduate minus much professional experience or if you have obvious gaps in your work history.

A functional resume can be a huge benefit to those job seekers who are changing careers to an area different from their previous occupation. Nevertheless, take notice that many recruiters and employers do not favor functional resumes and they are frequently not accepted by potential employer. Functional resume are used when you don’t have previous experience in the field, if there are holes in your employment history, or when skills are more significant than positions. An illustration of a functional resume follows.
Functional Resume (Sample)

Kenneth Walker
2929 Mount Hood Avenue
Never home, CA  98765
(209) 123-4567
Kenneth_ Walker @ gmail.com

Objectives: Seeking a position as an Police Officer for the City of Never Home, CA

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS
- Confidential Security Clearance US Government
- Meritorious promotion
- Proficient in windows software
- Team player

EXPERIENCE

Security
- Supervised security on board and pier side US Naval ships with $200 million of military equipment and personal.
- Experienced in handling of classified information

Communications
- Strong Ability to communicate in diverse environments
- Experienced with security radio 10 code

Supervision
- Supervised restricted personal ensuring they remained in detention while conducting work related behaviors.

Investigation
- Conducted investigation of security and safety compliance and wrote detailed reports.

Firefighter/EMT
- Respond to fire; hazardous condition, situations medical emergencies, emergency incidents that involve protecting life and property fire emergencies, and administration of first aid/ EMT services when called upon.

EDUCATION

US Navy Security, Firefighter, Leadership, Logistics, and EMT Training
San Joaquin Delta College AA Degree in Psychology Stockton, CA
University of the Pacific BA Degree in Sociology Stockton, CA
Networking

One of the leading ways to obtain employment is though networking. In laymen terms, networking is nothing more than getting to know people. Basically, everyone you know and meet can help you move your job search forward. Networking as part of your job search is about making contacts and building relationships that can lead to jobs or other work-related opportunities. Networking can be a key resource for advice, job leads and referrals and support. Do not be afraid to self-promote yourself and do not feel others see you as too aggressive. Networking is about building relationships. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70 percent of all jobs are found through networking.

Your network may be bigger than you realize and the more people you include in your network the better. Talk to everyone you know and think of ways to expand your network through helping others. Go to the Military Transition Office, job fairs and temporary employment agencies. Let everyone know the type of position you are looking for and ask if they know someone who can give you career advice or point you to a job opening.

To develop your network, start with those you know. Spouses, parents, and other relatives are instrumental networking resources in your quest towards obtaining employment. Exchange a few words with them about any jobs referrals or leads they may know of. Do not assume family members can’t help you. A few just may have a helpful tip or lead for you to start with. As members of a community, they have established
personal and professionally relationships with others, just as you have. It is possible their network could contribute towards your success.

Remember, your network begins with the people you know and people that know you. Reconnect with military friends and former co-workers to expand your network. This group is familiar with your job skills and knowledge due to their work experience with you. This group can be a key resource to job leads and referrals.

Take every situation as an opportunity to let others know about your hunt for employment. Contact close friends, former colleagues, neighbors, your pastor, and others you contact in your daily life. It is important to remember networking and connecting with others is a two-way street. The connection should benefit both people in the relationship whenever possible. So, if you obtain support from someone in your network system, be sure to offer an act of kindness and appreciation in return.

All active duty military personnel being discharge from there selected services are required to go to the Military Transition Office and register to attend Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes. The TAP classes provides a means for active duty military personnel who are being discharged to connect with job coaches. The office provides assistance with resume building, improve interview skills, and help connect with a variety of federal, state and local agencies in their desired geographical locations.

The TAP classes provided information about online networking resources such as LinkedIn, Facebook or USAJOBS based on your career path. Don’t forget to use
information received from this valuable resource to develop your online profile and access the many resources available online to job seekers.

Job fairs are another popular resource used in the job search. You can find information on upcoming job fairs. Jobs fairs can be advertised in a variety of places such as local college campuses, EDD or Unemployment offices, radio advertisements and even your local news stations. Jobs fairs are great opportunities to see what jobs are out there that match your interests and abilities, meet with employers face to face and expand your network.

Temporary employment agencies are also a valuable resource in the job service. These agencies provide a variety of services and support needed to find and retain employment. Temporary employment agencies have contacts with companies in your local area. Some of the agencies you may contact are AEROTEK, Kelly Temporary Services, Chrysalis and Labor Ready for full or part-time work.

Some advantages of working with temporary employment agencies are, you can gain exposure to different companies and its organizational environment and you can establish contact with potential employers while showing your skills and knowledge of the job. Frequently these temporary employment opportunities transition into permanent employment. But, be wary if a potential employer decides to keep you on staff permanently, you may have to wait out the contract the agency has with the employer. There may be a difference in salary for the remaining contract time period. This is called a “contract buyout”.

A final point to remember about these agencies is they can terminate from your assignment at any time and will not have health insurance, a pension plan, paid vacations or other benefits important to you.

Figure A2. Networking System
Interviewing

Interview Guidelines

When conducting a job search it is important to prepare and practice for interviews. Interviewing is a skill an acquired knowledge that can be improved upon through advance preparation, practice and repetition. Some guidelines to follow to improve the quality of your interview process.

Be Prepared

Do your homework on the agency you are applying for. All government agencies have websites where you can conduct research. Use USAJOBS and/or other government websites to reference sources to search for information on the agency and/or on their mission statement, social issues, policy decisions, etc., that might reflected the agency. Identify what you don’t know and create questions based on the gaps in your data. Be familiar with the kinds of services and the group or demographic profile of the population it serves. Be able to articulate why you want to work for the company and how your skills, abilities, and interests are, applicable and/or essential to the position you are applying for. This process can be of great assistance to you when you discuss your goals and explain how your skills and knowledge fit in with the mission of the agency during the interview.

Personal Conduct

When conducting any type of interview your personal conduct and behavior are important. Therefore, do not eat, chew gum, drink, or smoke. Always be professional by
referencing the person's by (Mr. or Ms., Mrs.). Only use the last name when during the interview unless you are instructed otherwise. Try not to be nervous and listen carefully to each question before responding. Silences during the interview may feel longer to you than it really is; however, silences can be golden. When you take a few moments before responding to a question you demonstrate you are giving a thoughtful and honest response to the question. Silences after you have answered a question can indicate that you have addressed what you needed to and have come to an appropriate end.

**Voice and Body Language**

Projection of your voice and body language can demonstrate your interest in the job and your energy level as a future employee. During interviews, Speak as if you are having a conversation with another professional who is trying to learn more about you.

**Self-Assurance**

Be self-assured, however do not be over confident in the interview process. Do not become intimidated by the interview process or the interviewers. Often interviewers are from other departments within the agency and are human resource professionals. If you can make the interviewers comfortable with you and provide information you believe most relevant to the job opening, you are well on your way to turning all of your interviews into memorable experiences. It is this type of connection that will likely help you obtain your goal of gainful employment.
Sample Interview Questions

When conducting an interview in person or over the phone, the questions may be similar. Some commonly asked questions during an initial interview are: Can you tell me something about yourself or your work experience? When answering a question such as this, be concise and to the point about your background. This will be the first chance to showcase your skills and accomplishments as they fit the position and company.

You may be asked, why did you apply for this position? This question requires research and preparation to answer. Read the company’s mission statement and the company’s projected growth on their website. This will showcase your research skills.

Frequently, interviewers may ask, why should they hire you? Your response should paint a picture to the potential employer that you are a good fit, while identifying all your skills, goals, and ambitions. Employers want employees who can bring value to the company.

Questions Employers Cannot Ask

- Do you have disability that could affect your job performance?
- Have been treated for mental health issues in the past?
- Have you ever seen a psychiatrist?
- Have been hospitalized for mental health issues?
- How did you become disabled?
- Will you need to take leave for medical or disabilities issues?
Remember interviewers can only ask an applicant about their abilities, not their disabilities. You are not legally required to respond to these questions.

**In-Person Interviews**

During an in person interview your appearance and physical dress are very important. Dress as you would for the job you are applying for. Appearance is a key sign of respect for the interviewer. Although staff at certain agencies may dress casually, do not take this as a sign you can present yourself in the same manner (no jeans, shorts, or sandals). Keep your appearance simple and professional for the job.

**Phone Interviews**

When applying for federal employment on USAJOBS, there is a big chance the next phase of the hiring process will be conducted by telephone. Phone interviews are becoming more common for the federal government. They are similar to an in person interviews and are usually brief, often last 20 to 25 minutes. Phone interviews are cost effect and saves time for hiring agencies. They serve as a screening substitute for cases in which the potential candidates they are considering live in a broad geographic area during an initial screening phase.

Phone interviews are real interviews, and hiring agencies can make a decision about you without actually seeing you. What is most important during a phone interview is the tone of your voice. Although this traits are important for all interviews, it is especially important during the phone interview because the interviewer has only your
voice to determine, your enthusiasm for the position, and other traits that can be seen
during an in person interview.

No matter whether your interview is in person or over the phone, always close
your interview process by saying "thank you." Remember the name and title of the
person conducting the interview and follow-up with a thank you note immediately
following the interview process. This action can indicate your professionalism and your
interest in the position you are applying for. This action will also ensure your connection
is memorable.

Summary

This Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Toolkit is designed to provide assistance
to veterans with disabilities who face special challenges finding employment resulting,
for example, from the veterans’ physical or mental health, or negative attitudes or
stereotypes on the part of employers. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Vocational
Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) program goal is to help veterans with disabilities
obtain and maintain suitable employment through services such as training and job search
assistance. The tool kit was created to provide another resource to veterans seeking and
wanting to obtain and maintain employment. First, aspect in the tool kit addresses the
various procedures practiced in the job placement process, building effective resumes and
cover letters tailored around the information provided on an application/ job posting by a
specific employer.
Additional, information includes in the tool kit is helping veterans with disabilities distinguish between the various types of resumes, and knowing who, what, when, where and how, to use each resumes for the most positive outcomes. The importance of recognizing interview techniques are also included address the need to understand the interviewee’s and interviewer body language for successful outcomes. In this importance stage of obtain employment after services have been delivered by the DVA, VR&E Counselors and Employment Coordinator, in the Sacramento, offices.

In addition, this toolkit may help VR&E reach the highest standard possible in delivery of services and increased over all outcome levels of veterans with disabilities seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Finally, this tool kit was prepared in order to reach its un-served and underserved veteran population, who find themselves in this particular situation for various reason, which might not have been covered. This take home tool kit will provide that additional support.
REFERENCES


