

# Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

## Media Release

*Director John E. Lee*

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### **For Immediate Release**

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**Olympia** – The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has been awarded a new competitive grant and a renewal grant from the US Department of Labor-Veterans' Employment and Training (US DOL-VETS), to provide assistance to homeless veterans seeking employment and a fresh start.

The agency has been awarded \$200,000 to address the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force which will serve veterans in Adams, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Spokane, Stevens, and Walla Walla Counties.

In addition, WDVA will receive \$300,000 for the second year to continue the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP-Urban) for Seattle, Tacoma, Bremerton Metropolitan Area and the surrounding Puget Sound Region of King, Kitsap, Pierce and Thurston Counties.

The employment focus of HVRP distinguishes it from most other programs for the homeless, which concentrate on more immediate needs such as emergency shelter, food and substance abuse treatment.

While these are critical components of any homeless program, and grantees are required to demonstrate that their clients' needs in those areas are met, the objective of HVRP is to enable homeless veterans to secure and keep jobs that will allow them to re-enter mainstream society as productive citizens.

WDVA will partner with federal, state and local agencies, as well as local faith-based and community organizations, and social service agencies for supportive services such as clothing, shelter, medical or substance-abuse treatment, and transportation assistance to meet the additional needs of HVRP participants.

WDVA proposes to enroll two hundred (200) eligible homeless veterans in HVRP - Urban, of which one hundred fifty-two (152) veterans will be placed into gainful employment at an average hourly wage of at least \$11.00. In addition, these services will assist one hundred fifty-two (152) participants to upgrade their residential status to transitional or permanent housing.

The HVRP-Rural network plans to enroll one hundred twenty-eight (128) eligible veterans and place ninety-six (96) in unsubsidized employment during year one of the grant. The WDVA works in conjunction with the Federal VA Supportive Employment Program, administered through the VA Healthcare System in Spokane and Walla Walla.

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans has profiled Washington State Department of Veterans HVRP in their Best Practices of Employee Assistance Programs, listing it as one of the nation's most effective homeless veteran employment assistance programs and one that can be replicated by community-based organizations and government agencies to successfully compete for federal grants.

If you know of a homeless veteran seeking employment, please contact WDVA at 1-800-562-2308. To learn more about services available to veterans in Washington State, go to <http://www.dva.wa.gov/> or call 1-800-562-2308.

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