

Housing and services for homeless veterans

*National outcomes from Volunteers of
America's GPD and HVRP-funded
grant programs*

DECEMBER 2011

Housing and services for homeless veterans

*National outcomes from Volunteers of America's
GPD and HVRP-funded grant programs*

December 2011

Prepared by:

Krysten Lynn Ryba, Jessica Meyerson, and Cael Warren

Wilder Research
451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700
www.wilderresearch.org

Acknowledgments

The authors of this report would like to thank Barbara Banaszynski, Senior Vice President of Program Operations, and Margaret Ratcliff, Executive Vice President of Affiliate Relations, from Volunteers of America's national office in Washington D.C. for their contributions to this report. This study could also not have been accomplished without the cooperation of the program staff from Volunteers of America's many GPD and HVRP programs.

Contents

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Context and purpose of this report.....	2
Study methods.....	3
Data limitations.....	4
Transitional Housing for Homeless Veterans (Grant and Per Diem programs)	5
Overview.....	5
Client demographics	6
Other supportive services.....	7
GPD Performance measures	9
Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (Employment services and training)	12
Overview.....	12
Client demographics	13
HVRP performance measures.....	17
Conclusions and issues to consider.....	19
References.....	21
Appendix A.....	22
Demographic information provided by GPD programs.....	22
Appendix B.....	25
Performance measures	25
Performance measures	28

Figures

1. Gender and age of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010	6
2. GPD client sub-populations	7
3. Supportive services offered by GPD programs	8
4. Selected outcomes for VOA Grant and Per Diem programs, 2010	10
5. Gender and age of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010	14
6. Military service of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010	15
7. Sub-populations of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010	16
8. Top three job skills or trainings received by HVRP clients.....	17
9. Selected employment outcomes for HVRP clients	18

Summary

Volunteers of America's Services for Homeless Veterans

Volunteers of America is one of the largest service providers to homeless veterans in the nation. In 2010, the organization served 7,700 veterans in over 33 cities in 19 states. Their portfolio of services for homeless veterans includes service centers, housing, and employment training designed to meet the specific needs of veterans.

Many of the programs and services provided to homeless veterans are funded by two federal funding streams: the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program and the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). These programs are intended to serve homeless veterans with transitional housing, supportive services, and employment assistance.

Background and purpose of this report

In March 2011, Volunteers of America's national office contracted with Wilder Research, a nonprofit research organization in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to review and analyze existing program performance data gathered by affiliates with GPD or HVRP funding. Although participation in the research effort was limited, over 40 programs nationwide submitted information about their client demographics, scope of services, or project outcomes to Wilder. The results of Wilder's data analysis are summarized in this report.

Key findings

Characteristics of populations served

- Both programs primarily serve African American and Caucasian men over 45 years old.
- Programs are reaching specialized populations of homeless veterans, such as those with chemical dependency issues, disabilities, and those who are chronically homeless.

Grant and Per Diem programs results

- Volunteers of America's GPD-funded transitional housing programs provide a full array of supportive services including linkages to community services, assistance with employment and housing, clinical services and crisis management, and life skills training or coaching.

- The vast majority of programs who provided performance measures seem to be meeting or exceeding their goals in fostering greater self-determination in clients, increasing their residential stability, and increasing their income and/or skill level. For example:
 - Over 80 percent of programs met or exceeded their goal for placing participants who had been in the program for at least six months in permanent housing at discharge
 - Over 90 percent of programs met or exceeded their stated goals for increasing participants' skills or income
 - At least 88 percent of programs met or exceeded their stated goals for enhancing participants' self-determination
 - Over 90 percent of programs met or exceeded their stated goals for helping homeless veterans develop and implement their own individualized service plans and in linking veterans to employment or educational services and relevant entitlement programs

Programs were slightly less successful in the area of providing participants with adequate and stable housing upon program discharge (where only 60% of programs met or exceeded their target goals). This could be reflective of the general scarcity of adequate and stable housing options for veterans in most U.S. communities, rather than any particular deficiencies in affiliates' programming.

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program Results

- Volunteers of America's HVRP grantees excel in providing job training to nearly all of the enrolled participants: 96 percent of clients received training (the federal benchmark is 80%).
- The grantees' Entered Employment Rates outperform the 2010 national average (54% versus 45%).
- Volunteers of America's HVRP program participants' wages are higher than the national average: \$8.62 per hour at time of employment (compared to \$7.72 in the U.S. overall).
- However, HVRP participants had difficulty retaining their jobs: Sixty-four percent of Volunteers of America program participants who became employed while in the program still had a job at 180 days. (This is lower than the national average employment retention rate for HVRP participants in 2010, which is 76%).

Conclusion and issues to consider

Overall, the results of this study clearly indicate that Volunteers of America's GPD and HVRP-funded programs are:

- Achieving most of their performance objectives
- Outperforming national standards in most program areas
- Successfully providing a wide variety of critical services to veterans in crisis

The slight underperformance in Employment Retention Rates by HVRP programs may suggest a need for more ongoing supportive services to program participants once they are placed in employment; however, more research, drawing on data from a larger sample of HVRP programs, is clearly necessary to form any specific recommendations for program improvement.

Introduction

Background

Volunteers of America has provided housing and supportive services for homeless veterans since 1987, when the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs began to collaborate with community service providers in an effort to expand services to meet the needs of an increasing number of veterans in crisis. Today, Volunteers of America is one of the largest service providers to homeless veterans in the nation. In 2010, the organization served 7,700 veterans in over 33 cities in 19 states.

Their portfolio of services for homeless veterans includes service centers, housing, and employment training designed to meet the specific needs of veterans. More specifically, Volunteers of America currently operates:

- Transitional housing for veterans
- Homeless Veterans Re-Integration Programs
- Permanent supportive housing programs for homeless veterans
- Transitional housing programs, licensed as alcohol and drug treatment centers
- Service centers
- Mobile Service Center
- Special needs grants for the chronically mentally ill and frail elderly
- Incarcerated Veterans Transitional Programs (employment)

Many of the programs and services provided to homeless veterans are funded by two federal funding streams: the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program and the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). These programs are intended to serve homeless veterans with transitional housing, supportive services, and employment assistance. Some Volunteers of America affiliates participating in these grant programs also focus on specific high-needs subpopulations such as disabled veterans, formerly incarcerated veterans, veterans of a particular service era, men, women, and families. GPD and HVRP grants are both awarded annually, based on a competitive application process, but HVRP grantees are eligible for up to 3 years of funding, depending upon their overall performance.

Through their direct support via service centers, housing, and supportive services, coupled with outreach and advocacy efforts for veterans experiencing or at-risk for homelessness, Volunteers of America will play an integral role in the federal initiative to end homelessness among veterans by 2015¹.

Context and purpose of this report

In early 2011, Volunteers of America’s national office contracted with Wilder Research, a nonprofit research organization in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to review and analyze existing program performance data gathered by affiliates participating in the Grant and Per Diem and HVRP programs that fund transitional housing and employment services and training, respectively. The purpose of this research effort was to better understand the characteristics of these programs’ services and clients and to provide a clearer sense of how the programs were performing overall. Wilder’s findings are summarized in this report.

¹ In 2010, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness released a collaborative plan “Opening doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness”. One of the key goals of the plan was to “prevent and end homelessness among veterans in five years”.

Study methods

Like all federal grantees, participants in the HVRP and GPD programs are required to collect some standardized program performance data, which they must report to their federal funders on a regular basis. (For example, HVRP programs must report their “common measures” to the Department of Labor every quarter, while GPD programs must report annually on their progress in helping participants increase their residential stability.)

In March 2011, Volunteers of America’s national office contacted affiliates with homeless veteran’s services and asked them to submit their most recent 12-month-cycle of federal performance data for analysis by Wilder Research. The national office’s data collection effort included 37 transitional housing sites participating in the Grant and Per Diem program and 16 Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Programs across sixteen VOA affiliates across the country. Between March and May 2011, Wilder Research received 29 GPD and 12 HVRP reports (a 78% and 70% response rate, respectively).

A second wave of data collection was initiated in July 2011, primarily to encourage further participation from affiliates and to obtain client demographics from transitional housing programs with GPD-funded beds (HVRP federal reporting routinely includes this information). Two additional GPD performance outcome reports were received, and 23 programs provided GPD demographic information as a result of this extended effort.

All of the information submitted to Wilder Research was entered into a database, grouped into common outcome areas whenever possible, and statistically analyzed using SPSS. However, as described below, some program’s data had to be excluded from Wilder’s analysis because it was incomplete or did not fall readily into any common outcome group or category.

Data limitations

The findings of this report are significantly impacted by two persistent issues relating to both data collection and data quality:

1. Wilder Research did not receive information for all GPD and HVRP programs in operation; and
2. GPD performance measures varied widely across programs, often making it difficult to aggregate information.

Since Volunteers of America is currently engaged in an effort to move all of its affiliates to a common data collection platform (the online information management system, SharePoint), some of these data limitations may cease to be an issue in future years—making a more comprehensive and definitive analysis of cross-site outcomes possible. However, at the present time it is important to note that many of the results and trends reported here are based on a fairly limited data set, which is not fully inclusive of all affiliates' activities and outcomes.

A more detailed listing of all the data Wilder Research received from each affiliate is included as an appendix.

Transitional Housing for Homeless Veterans (Grant and Per Diem programs)

Overview

The Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program is funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV). The principle mission of the GPD program is to provide time-limited housing with supportive services as an aid to the transition to permanent housing for homeless veterans. Providers with supportive housing (up to 24 months) and/or service centers offering supportive services (such as case management, education, crisis intervention, and counseling) are eligible to apply for:

- Grants (funds for non-operational costs such as construction, renovation, or acquisition of a building); and/or
- Per Diem monies (used to pay for the cost of operation based on number of clients housed).

Consideration is also given to applicants reaching out to specialized populations such as disabled veterans, formerly incarcerated veterans, female veterans, and families in which one or both parents are veterans.

Volunteers of America currently operates 37 transitional housing programs for homeless veterans and their families, ranging in size from 7 to over 300 beds, that are funded by the Grant and Per Diem program.

Client demographics

Twenty-three GPD-funded transitional housing programs (a total of 710 GPD-funded beds across programs) submitted detailed information on clients served in 2010. The data shows Volunteers of America's transitional housing for homeless veterans primarily served African American or Caucasian men between 35 and 64 years old (see Figure 1).

1. Gender and age of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010

	Number	Percent
Total clients served	1,437	
Gender (N=1,416) a		
Male	1,385	98%
Female	31	2%
Age (N=1,292) b		
18-19 years old	-	-
20-24	1	<1%
25-29	25	2%
30-34	37	3%
35-44	149	12%
45-54	576	46%
55-64	431	34%
65 years old and older	37	3%
Ethnic background		
African American	688	48%
Caucasian	684	48%
Hispanic	37	3%
Native American	13	<1%
Other	12	<1%

Source: Demographic data supplied by VOA affiliates.

Notes: Data include 23 of 37 programs from 10 of 15 affiliates, though some demographic statistics (as indicated in the notes that follow) were unavailable for some programs.

^a Includes 22 of 37 programs from 10 of 15 affiliates.

^b Includes 21 of 37 programs from 9 of 15 affiliates.

Several GPD-funded programs (see Appendix) also provided information on specific sub-populations served. Across the programs who submitted data, nearly half (49%) of their clients were chemically dependent or disabled, and one-third (33%) of their clients had a history of incarceration. Very few programs indicated they served families of homeless veterans.

2. GPD client sub-populations

	Number	Percent
Chemically Dependent	707	49%
Disabled	698	49%
Ex-Offender	477	33%
Families	1	<1%

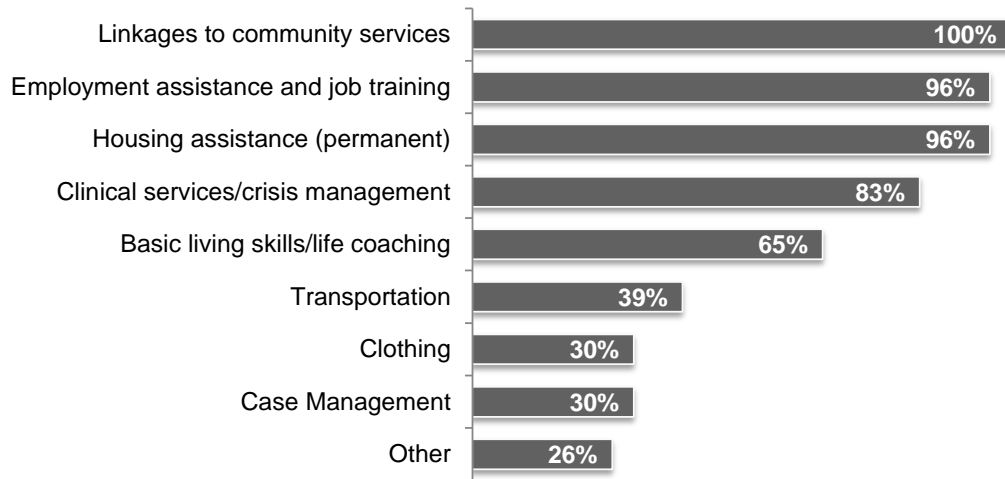
Source: Demographic data supplied by VOA affiliates.

Notes: Categories are not mutually exclusive and will therefore total more than 100%. See appendix for specific programs that provided this information.

Other supportive services

In addition to housing, Volunteers of America GPD-funded transitional housing programs also offer a wide array of supportive services; 22 programs provided detailed information on the types of services offered which is summarized in Figure 3. All GPD programs who provided information specified they had linkages to community services (100%), offered some type of employment assistance and job training (96%) and/or housing assistance (96%), and many also provided clinical services (83%). “Other” includes food, family reunification and relationship reparation, community involvement, and Veterans Upward Bound program.

3. Supportive services offered by GPD programs (N=22)



Source: Data supplied by 22 of 37 GPD programs. See appendix for specific programs.

GPD Performance measures

Grantees are required to report annual performance outcomes for each of the three goal domains for the GPD program:

1. Increasing residential stability
2. Increasing participant skill level and/or income; and
3. Fostering greater self-determination of participants.

Within these three domains, the specific goals for each program could vary, depending on state requirements and program preferences. For example, within “increased residential stability” some programs used a broad outcome measure such as “[%] exiting the program will enter stable, adequate housing,” while others tracked more detailed information about the number of clients placed in permanent supportive housing after specific time periods. For the purposes of this analysis, Wilder’s research team looked at each program’s specific goals and recorded whether or not they were achieving their self-defined targets. Outcomes have been standardized and grouped accordingly whenever possible.

4. Selected outcomes for VOA Grant and Per Diem programs, 2010

	Number of programs	Number of Participants	Percentage of programs		
			Did not meet goal	Met goal	Exceeded goals
Increased residential stability					
Of those admitted to GPD program, 50% will stay housed for 6 months or more.	10	334	10%	10%	80%
Of those housed for 6 months or more, 50% will be placed in permanent housing upon discharge.	9	207	11%	22%	67%
Of those placed in permanent housing, 50% will remain in residence for 1 year.	6	107	17%	50%	33%
Participants exiting the program will enter adequate, stable housing (positive housing outcome).	6	198	40%	20%	40%
Increased skills and/or income					
100% of participants will develop an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) with VOA staff.	12	665	8%	67%	25%
Of those including increased skills and/or income in ISP, participants will become employed or part of an employment or education program prior to moving into permanent housing.	10	305	10%	20%	70%
Participants will be assessed for eligible entitlements.	11	295	0%	70%	30%
Greater self-determination					
100% of participants enrolled and participated in substance abuse or mental health treatment as needed.	9	451	22%	88%	NA
Participants will work cooperatively with VOA staff to accomplish self-determination goals in ISP.	9	390	0%	11%	89%

Source: GPD Performance Review Remarks submitted by VOA (17 total). Please note several programs provided performance data without identifying their specific goals, and are therefore not included in Figure 4. However, their data also suggests affiliates programs are on par or exceed national averages.

As Figure 4 indicates, the vast majority of affiliates who shared their data met their target goals for the GPD program. For example:

- Over 80 percent of programs met or exceeded their goals for placing participants who had been in the program for at least six months in permanent housing at discharge
- Over 90 percent of programs met or exceeded their stated goals for increasing participants' skills or income

- At least 88 percent of programs met or exceeded their stated goals for enhancing participants' self-determination

Volunteers of America affiliates seem to have been particularly effective in helping homeless veterans develop and implement their own individualized service plans and in linking veterans to employment or educational services and relevant entitlement programs. At least 90 percent of reporting programs met or exceeded their goals in these specific outcome areas.

There does appear to be some room for improvement in the area of providing participants with adequate and stable housing upon program discharge (where approximately 40% of affiliates failed to meet their goals). However, Volunteers of America's relatively weak performance in this particular area may be reflective of the general scarcity of housing options for veterans in most communities, rather than any particular deficiencies in affiliates' programming. This seems likely since nationwide only 53 percent of homeless veterans participating in GPD programs are discharged with positive housing outcomes (Kasprow, Cuerdon, DiLella, Cavallaro, Hareluk, 2010).

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (Employment services and training)

Overview

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program is administered by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) within the U.S. Department of Labor. It was the first nationwide program designed to specifically place homeless veterans in jobs. The specific objectives of the program are to:

- Provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force; and
- Stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.

HVRP is “job-focused;” however, it also addresses the issues or needs of homeless veterans that affect their ability to become employed, such as physical or mental health issues, substance abuse, and basic needs such as housing, clothing, and food. Intake assessments are conducted with each client, and they may be referred to these supportive services prior to becoming enrolled in HVRP. Organizations or agencies who apply for HVRP funding must provide detailed information about their capacity to provide supportive services and/or their coordination and linkages with other service programs (preferably specialized to meet the needs of veterans) funded by other federal agencies, workforce centers, and transitional and permanent housing programs.

Once enrolled, program staff develop Individualized Employment Plans (IEP) to better coordinate the employment and training services each client receives, establish employment goals, and track employment placement and retention. Homeless veterans are offered a variety of employment and training services through HVRP to prepare them to reenter the labor force, including:

- Classroom training
- Job search activities
- Job preparation
- Subsidized trial employment
- On-the-job training

- Job placement
- Placement follow-up services
- Vocational counseling

According to the information provided in May 2011, Volunteers of America operates 17 HVRP programs across seven states. HVRP programs in Louisville and Cleveland have been profiled as best practice models by the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (2004).

Client demographics

Organizations receiving HVRP funding are required to submit quarterly federal reports through the VETS web-based system (VOPAR). The reporting format, called Common Measures, is highly standardized and detailed instructions and technical assistance are available to all grantees. This data collection strategy allows the Federal Government to evaluate the program's effectiveness over time and allows grantees to track all participants engaged in the program (whether they were successfully placed in a job or not).

Accordingly, nearly all of the VOA affiliates who provided information about their HVRP programs (11 of 17 total) were included in Wilder's analysis with little difficulty.

As Tables 5 and 6 show, Volunteers of America's HVRP grantees are primarily serving African American or Caucasian males between 45 and 54 years old who served in the military more than 20 years ago.

5. Gender and age of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010

	Number	Percent
Total clients served	918	
Gender		
Male	852	93%
Female (a)	66	7%
Age		
18-19 years old	2	<1%
20-24	18	2%
25-29	43	5%
30-34	45	5%
35-44	156	17%
45-54	465	51%
55-64	182	20%
65 years old and older	6	<1%
Ethnic background		
African American	487	53%
Caucasian	348	38%
Hispanic	64	7%
Native American	5	<1%
Other	12	1%

Source: Common Measures Technical Performance Report (TPR) submitted by VOA HVRP grantees.

Notes: Data include 11 of 17 HVRP grantees. Ten grantees supplied two quarters (six months) of data within the study period of 01/01/2010 – 12/31/2010, eight provided data for 01/01/2010 – 06/30/2010, and two provided data for 07/01/2010 – 12/31/2010. One provided data for the full calendar year 01/01/2010 – 12/31/2010.

^(a) Of the 66 women served by these grantees, half (33) were served by a single grantee, the Boyle Heights (Los Angeles) HVRP for Females and Families.

6. Military service of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010

	Number	Percent
Total clients served	918	
Last military service		
0-3 Years Ago	56	6%
4-7 Years Ago	48	5%
8-11 Years Ago	32	4%
12-15 Years Ago	41	5%
16-19 Years Ago	84	9%
20+ Years Ago	655	71%

Source: Common Measures Technical Performance Report (TPR) submitted by VOA HVRP grantees.

Notes: Data include 11 of 17 HVRP grantees. Ten grantees supplied two quarters (six months) of data within the study period of 01/01/2010 – 12/31/2011,; eight provided data for 01/01/2010 – 06/30/2010, and two provided data for 07/01/2010 – 12/31/2010. One provided data for the full calendar year 01/01/2010 – 12/31/2010.

In addition to demographic data, HVRP also tracks some specific indicators on participants, shown in Table 7. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of clients are veterans at-risk (99%) or experiencing (97%) homelessness (in accordance with the federal program requirements) as well as clients considered chronically homeless (23%).

HVRP grantees are also required to report on a number of designations specific to veterans (based on their military service) that affect their eligibility for VA benefits and preference points for federal jobs, e.g., Campaign Badge, Disabled, Special Disabled and specific tours of duty (for more information see <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/vetpref/vetspref.htm>). Attendance at Stand-Down events (grassroots, community-based intervention program designed to help homeless veterans) is also recorded.

7. Sub-populations of clients served January 1 – December 31, 2010

	Number	Percent
Economically disadvantaged	908	99%
Homeless	895	97%
Welfare/public assistance recipient	434	47%
Chronically homeless	211	23%
Campaign Badge	97	11%
Disabled	91	10%
Recently separated/Newly separated	63	7%
Operation Iraqi Freedom	59	6%
Operation Enduring Freedom	43	5%
Special disabled	42	5%
Stand-Down	38	4%

Source: Common Measures Technical Performance Report (TPR) submitted by VOA HVRP grantees.

Notes: Data include 11 of 17 HVRP grantees. Ten programs supplied two quarters (six months) of data within the study period of 01/01/2010 – 12/31/2011, eight provided data for 01/01/2010 – 06/30/2010, and two provided data for 07/01/2010 – 12/31/2010. One provided data for the full calendar year 01/01/2010 – 12/31/2010.

HVRP performance measures

Wilder Research received HVRP reports from five Volunteers of America affiliates in eleven cities. Common Measures Technical Performance Reports (TPR) provide unduplicated counts for each of the four quarters over the program year and an additional three quarters used to measure outcomes for an additional 270 days after clients exit the program. In terms of content, the report includes information on the total number served, program outcomes (e.g., employment placement and wages), and services (the type of training provided to participants). The overall intake rate for HVRP was 53 percent², that is, of participants assessed, over half enrolled in the program.

One important component of the HVRP program, and tracked specifically in Common Measures, is the employment training received by homeless veterans in the program (see Table 8). Specifically, the VETS-DOL requirement is 80 percent of homeless veterans enrolled in the program must participate in job skills or training. Volunteers of America HVRP grantees exceeded this benchmark with 96 percent of participants receiving training. Across all grantees, the three specific employment trainings most often received by enrollees were classroom training (59%), occupational skills (33%), and on the job training (30%).

8. Top three job skills or trainings received by HVRP clients

	Percent of enrollees
Classroom training	59%
Occupational skills training	33%
On the job training	30%

Source: Common Measures Technical Performance Report (TPR) submitted by VOA HVRP programs.

Notes: Categories are not mutually exclusive and will therefore total more than 100%. Data includes 8 HVRP programs. The study period is 07/2009–6/2010.

Another critical measure of HVRP performance is the successful placement of homeless veterans in employment. On average, 62 percent of enrolled HVRP clients became employed at some point during their involvement in the program. Table 9 summarizes the Common Measures used to evaluate performance in this area— retention at 90 and 180 days, and the average wage.

² Enrollment rate based on nine TPR reports that provided at least 4 quarters of data for the 2009-2010 program year.

9. Selected employment outcomes for HVRP clients

	Percent of enrollees
Entered Employment Rate (EER) ¹	54%
Employment Retention Rate (ERR) ²	64%
Average hourly wage at placement	\$8.62
Average hourly wage at retention	\$9.72

Source: Common Measures Technical Performance Report (TPR) submitted by VOA HVRP programs

Notes: Data include 6 HVRP programs who provided 7th quarter reports for the program period starting in 7/2009. This allowed for 270 day follow-up information for all participants to be included in the calculation.

¹ Entered Employment Rate (EER) – reports the percent of participants employed in the quarter after they received services. This is a 90 day performance measure.

² Employment Retention Rate (ERR) – reports the percent of participants of those entering employment who remain employed the following two quarters. This is a 180 day performance measure.

Just over half (54%) of participants entered employment and earned wages in the quarter after exit (EER rate). This is higher than the 2010 national average of 45 percent (United States Department of Labor, 2011). Sixty-four percent of Volunteers of America’s HVRP participants who obtained jobs reported sustained employment for two complete quarters after leaving the program. This slightly underperforms the national average Employee Retention Rate (76% in 2010). This suggests clients are having difficulty retaining their jobs for at least 180 days following program discharge, and Volunteers of America affiliates may need to focus more on retention-related issues in their HVRP employment programs.

HVRP clients also appear to earn relatively high average hourly wages (\$8.62 per hour at the time of job placement and \$9.72 per hour at retention). These average wages exceed most states' minimum wage requirements and compare favorably with the average hourly wage of approximately \$7.72 per hour earned by most HVRP participants nationally³ (United States Department of Labor, 2011).

³ Hourly rate calculated from annual average earnings in 2010.

Conclusions and issues to consider

Overall, the data summarized here suggest that Volunteers of America's programs and services for homeless veterans are performing well and achieving most of their objectives:

- While both programs primarily serve African American and Caucasian men over 45 years old, they are successfully reaching specialized populations of homeless veterans, such as those with chemical dependency issues, disabilities, and those who are chronically homeless.
- Programs funded through the GPD funding stream appear to be especially effective, with the vast majority outperforming national averages and reporting that they are achieving all or most of their stated GPD program goals.
- Affiliates' HVRP programs also appear to be making significant progress in training homeless veterans and placing them in relatively high wage jobs.

However, there are two distinct goal areas in which affiliates' programs appear to have room for improvement.

- Only 60 percent of GPD programs met their target goals in the area of providing participants with adequate and stable housing upon program discharge.
- Only 64 percent of HVRP participants who entered employment while in the program were still employed 180 days later.

While the failure to find adequate and stable housing for more GPD program participants is probably reflective of a nationwide shortage of affordable long-term housing options, the Employment Retention Rates for HVRP participants reported here are slightly lower than national trends.

Based on these employment placement and retention figures, it seems possible that—even if Volunteers of America's HVRP programs are placing *more* veterans in jobs than other service providers—these veterans are somehow less employment-ready, or less able to access ongoing supportive services, than the veterans being placed by other programs. In order to improve employment retention rates, Volunteers of America affiliates with HVRP programs may need to partner in new ways with employers and community-based service providers to provide truly stable employment opportunities and a broader array of long-term supportive services. However, it is important to note that the data limitations inherent in this study make it difficult to draw strong conclusions about the need for such program improvements.

What is clear from the available performance data is that the vast majority of Volunteers of America's GPD and HVRP programs are having a significant impact on thousands of homeless at-risk veterans, offering them a broad range of successful housing, training, and employment services that few other federally-funded service providers can match. Based on these outcomes, it seems likely that Volunteers of America will continue to play a leading role in national initiatives to end homelessness among veterans in coming years.

References

Kasprow, W. J., Cuerdon, T., DiLella, D., Cavallaro, L. A., & Hareluk, N. (2010). *Health care for homeless veterans programs: Twenty-third annual report*. West Haven, CT: Department of Veterans Affairs.

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. (2004). *Homeless veterans reintegration program: Best practice profiles of employment assistance programs*. Retrieved from http://www.nchv.org/downloads/HVRP_Best_Practices_Text.pdf

United States Department of Labor. (2011, March 17). *State level employment outcomes for veterans and disabled veterans*. Retrieved from <http://www.dol.gov/vets/vetoutcomes/index.htm>

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). *Opening doors: Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Retrieved from http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors_2010_FSPPpreventEndHomeless.pdf

Appendix A

Demographic information provided by GPD programs

Affiliate	Local program name	City	Demographics received	Race included	Gender included	Age included	Disabled included	Ex-offender included	Families included	Chem. dep. included	Supportive services included
FLFL	Ben Singleton Center Veterans Transitional Housing	Jacksonville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FLFL	Cocoa Multi Service Center Veterans Transitional Housing	Cocoa	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Gainesville Veterans Transitional Housing	Gainesville	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Key West Veterans Transitional Housing	Key West	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Lake City Cabins Veterans Transitional Housing	Lake City	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Miami Veterans Transitional Housing	Miami	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Punta Gorda Veterans Transitional Housing	Punta Gorda	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Tampa Veterans Transitional Housing - PDO	Tampa	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
FLFL	Tallahassee Veterans Transitional Housing	Tallahassee	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
ININ	Homeless Veterans Program	Indianapolis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Affiliate	Local program name	City	Demographics received	Race included	Gender included	Age included	Disabled included	Ex-offender included	Families included	Chem. dep. included	Supportive services included
KYKY	Veterans Drug & Alcohol Services	Lexington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LABR	Supportive Housing - Veterans	Baton Rouge	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LANO	Veterans Transitional Housing Program	New Orleans	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
LASH	VA Housing	Shreveport	X	X	X	X					X
NYNY	Safe Haven Veterans Per Diem Program	Bronx	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NYNY	Veterans Initiative	Bronx	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NYNY	Cromwell Avenue Safe Haven	Bronx	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OHGR	Transitional Living Program	Columbus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OHGR	Dayton VA Grant & Per Diem	Dayton	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
OHGR	Veterans Resource Center	Cleveland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SCNC	VOA-Maple Court	Durham	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WYWY	Independence Hall	Billings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WYWY	Freedom Hall	Sheridan	X	X		X	X			X	
CALA	VS -21 Homeless Veteran's Affairs Programs	Downtown Los Angeles									
CALA	VS-65 Veteran Special Needs Services	Downtown Los Angeles									

Affiliate	Local program name	City	Demographics received	Race included	Gender included	Age included	Disabled included	Ex-offender included	Families included	Chem. dep. included	Supportive services included
CALA	VS-90 West Los Angeles	West Los Angeles									
CALA	The Barracks	Downtown Los Angeles									
MISE	Veteran Housing Program (VHP)	Lansing									
MISE	VHP Expansion	Lansing									
MISE	Veterans in Progress	Lansing									
NYRO	Housing for Homeless Veterans	Binghamton									
OHNW	Veterans Transitional Housing	Sandusky									
WASP	Eagle's Rest House	Spokane									
WASP	Rest & Recoup House	Spokane									

Appendix B

Performance measures

Grant and Per Diem Programs

Fourteen of the 29 reports received by Wilder Research were used to assess overall GPD program performance.

Fifteen reports received by Wilder Research were excluded from the analysis (Table 2). Most commonly, reports were dropped because:

1. The report received by Wilder was a VA facilities inspection report and did not include performance/outcome data.
2. The report was missing dates, had an unduplicated sample size, or other factors.
3. The report did not provide outcome data related to the 3 goal areas of the GPD program (increased residential stability, increased skill and/or income, or improved self-determination) or the outcomes provided were too general or too specific to be aggregated with other data received.

Lastly, 8 reports were never received by Wilder Research (Table 3).

1. GPD program reports included in performance analysis

Affiliate	City	Project #	Local Program Name	Report year
FLFL	Cocoa	01-111-FL	Cocoa Multi Service Center Veterans Transitional Housing	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
FLFL	Gainesville	04-099FL	Gainesville Veterans Transitional Housing I	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
FLFL	Gainesville	07-63-FL	Gainesville Veterans Transitional Housing II	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
FLFL	Key West	02-200 FL	Key West Veterans Transitional Housing	FY2010
FLFL	Key West	99-065 FL	Key West Veterans Transitional Housing	FY2010
FLFL	Lake City	05-120-FL	Lake City Cabins Veterans Transitional Housing	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
FLFL	Miami	No #.	Miami Veterans Transitional Housing I	FY2010
FLFL	Miami	No #.	Miami Veterans Transitional Housing II	FY2010
FLFL	Punta Gorda	07-813-FL	Punta Gorda Veterans Transitional Housing	FY2010
FLFL	Tallahassee	08-742-FL	Tallahassee Veterans Transitional Housing	2/31/2010-02/07/2011
OHGR	Cleveland	000-117-OH	Veterans Resource Center	CY2010
WYWY	Sheridan	No #.	Freedom Hall	04/2010-03/2011
MISE	Lansing	09-009-MI	Veteran Housing Program (VHP)	01/01/2010-12/31/2009
MISE	Lansing	99-009-MI	VHP Expansion	01/01/2010-12/31/2010

2. GPD program reports received but excluded from performance analysis

Affiliate	City	Project #	Local Program Name	Report year
CALA	Downtown Los Angeles	Multiple	VS -21 Homeless Veteran's Affairs Programs	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
CALA	Downtown Los Angeles		VS-65 Veteran Special Needs Services	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
CALA	West Los Angeles		VS-90 West Los Angeles	1/1/2010-11/30/2010
CALA	Downtown Los Angeles	Multiple	The Barracks	1/1/2010-12/31/2010
FLFL	Jacksonville		Ben Singleton Center Veterans Transitional Housing	Unknown
FLFL	Tampa		Tampa Veterans Transitional Housing - PDO	Unknown
ININ	Indianapolis	03-051-1N	Homeless Veterans Program	2010
KYKY	Lexington		Veterans Drug & Alcohol Services	2010
LABR	Baton Rouge	02-0333-LA	Supportive Housing - Veterans	10/01/2009- 9/30/2010
LANO	New Orleans	07-807-LA	Veterans Transitional Housing Program	Unknown
LASH	Shreveport		VA Housing	Unknown
MISE	Lansing		Veterans in Progress	Unknown
SCNC	Durham	03-238-NC	VOA-Maple Court	FY2010
WYWY	Billings		Independence Hall	04/2010-03/2010
OHNW	Sandusky	98-05-OH	Veterans Transitional Housing	Unknown

3. GPD program reports never received

Affiliate	Local Program Name
NYNY Bronx	Safe Haven Veterans Per Diem Program
NYNY Bronx	Veterans Initiative
NYNY Bronx	Cromwell Avenue Safe Haven
NYRO Binghamton	Housing for Homeless Veterans
OHGR Columbus	Transitional Living Program
OHGR Dayton	Dayton VA Grant & Per Diem
WASP Spokane	Eagle's Rest House
WASP Spokane	Rest & Recoup House

Performance measures

Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs

Eleven HVRP reports received by Wilder Research were used to describe client characteristics (Tables 5, 6, and 7), eight were used to describe the first performance measure (Table 8) and six were used to describe the second performance measure (Table 9).

4. HVRP reports received and included

Affiliate	City	Grant Number	Local Program Name	Description
CALA	Downtown Los Angeles	HV-19163-09-60-5-6	HVRP - Helping Veterans Receive Paychecks	This program provides housing assistance and comprehensive employment and job training to veterans who would otherwise be homeless or jobless.
CALA	Boyle Heights	HV20685-10-60-5-6	IVTP - Incarcerated Veterans Transitional Program	Provides job training and placement referrals, benefits linkage and housing placement to assist veterans as they transition back into society through employment. Must be formerly incarcerated veteran.
CALA	Boyle Heights	HV20711-10-60-5-6	HVRP for Females and Families	Supportive services to assist female veterans and veterans with families overcome the challenges of under-employment, homelessness, at risk for homelessness, education, training.
FLFL	Cocoa	HV-19113-09-60-5-12	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project- Cocoa	This program provides employment and support services to homeless disabled veterans.
FLFL	Miami	HV-19167 PY09	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program-Miami	This program provides employment and support services to homeless disabled veterans.
KYKY	Cerido	HV-16445-07-60-5-54	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program WV	Assist homeless veterans to find and retain employment and locate housing through a Department of Labor grant.
KYKY	Knoxville	HV-19120-09-60-5-21	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Knoxville	This program is dedicated to assisting homeless veterans find and retain employment and locate housing through a partnership with community resources and agencies, funded by a Department of Labor grant.
KYKY	Louisville	HV-17615-08-60-5-21	HVRP Louisville	Homeless veterans reintegration project
MISE	Lansing		HVRP Program	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) is a comprehensive employment and training program with wrap-around supportive services designed to address employment barriers.
OHGR	Cleveland	HV-19128-09-60-5-39	Veteran's Workforce Training Program	On the job, paid training experience as a stepping stone to self-sufficiency.
OHGR	Dayton		Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program -- Dayton	Job training and employment services for homeless veterans. - Dayton
OHGR	Columbus	HV-19129-09-60-5-39	Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Columbus	Homeless veterans are provided with job training and employment programs. - Columbus

5 HVRP reports never received

Affiliate	City	Local Program Name	Description
CALA	Boyle Heights	Crystal Vision Program	Supportive services for female veterans experiencing PTSD, MST, TBI and or severe depression. Must be female veteran from OEF/OIF/Afghanistan era.
ILIL	Chicago	Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program	Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program provides tools needed to obtain gainful employment, including training and resources.
KYKY	Louisville	Incarcerated Veterans Transitional Program	This program is dedicated to assisting homeless veterans find and retain employment and locate housing.
MENH	Biddeford	Veterans Career House	Combined transitional housing and employment program designed to provide safe supportive housing to homeless male veterans.
KYKY	Lexington	St. James Supportive Services Program	Program provides supportive services to homeless veterans in a transitional housing facility operated by the Foundation for Affordable Housing. The goal is permanent housing, stabilization and self-sufficiency.