



FEB 3 2012

VETERANS' PROGRAM LETTER NO. 03-12

TO: ALL REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS FOR
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY (SWA) ADMINISTRATORS
ALL REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, EMPLOYMENT AND
TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (INFO)

FROM: ISMAEL ORTIZ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ismael Ortiz", is written over a horizontal line.

SUBJECT: Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Employment Workshop Redesign
and Implementation

- I. **Purpose:** To provide information and implementation guidance on the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop.
- II. **Rescissions:** None
- III. **References:** Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 1144(a), Section 502 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FY 1991, P.L. 101-510. Section 302 of the "Veterans Education and Benefits Act" of 2001, P.L. 107-103.
- IV. **Background:** On August 15, 2011, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) awarded a contract to Micro Systems Automation Group (MSAG) to redesign the Department of Labor (DOL) TAP Employment Workshop. That work has been completed and the initial training of over 120 Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) facilitators took place on November 28 – December 2, 2011.

The new DOL Employment Workshop is designed to address three levels of employment readiness – Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. Participant's level of readiness is determined using an online assessment tool, the Employment Readiness Scale™ (ERS). The ERS is an internationally-validated tool that

measures the nine key factors that contribute to successful employment transitions, as well as the main challenges that can interfere with work performance. It gives users a road map of what they need to do to find and keep a civilian job. The ERS tool allows users to measure their progress towards being fully ready to transition successfully, and can be taken up to six times.

The initial structure of the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop was a 4-day workshop in which the first day covers content for those assessing at the Basic level, the second and third day covers content for those assessing at the Intermediate level, and the final day covers content for those assessing at the Advanced level. Following discussion with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the military services, VETS agreed to a 3-day structure for the redesigned workshop. The content for those assessing at the Basic level will be provided in an online format rather than in a classroom.

The redesigned TAP Employment Workshop will be a 3-day workshop. Day 1 and Day 2 will cover content for the Intermediate level and Day 3 will cover content for the Advanced level. Transitioning service members assessing as Basic or Intermediate after taking the ERS will start the workshop on Day 1. Service members assessing at the Advanced level may start the workshop on Day 3. Those assessing at the Basic level will be highly encouraged to view the online content of the Basic modules prior to attending the workshop.

During pre-separation counseling, the military service pre-separation counselor will provide the transitioning service member with an instruction sheet on the ERS. The instructions have an access token the service member uses to set up their ERS account. The service member must take the ERS before being scheduled for the TAP Employment Workshop, because their assessment will determine on which day they start. Participants will receive instructions about workshop registration after they complete the ERS. The military services' transition personnel will verify the service member has taken the ERS and then register them for the appropriate start day of the workshop.

Once the service member has completed the employment workshop, they will be required to take the ERS again. This will provide a before and after record of effectiveness of the workshop in moving them to a higher level of employment readiness. The ERS account allows the service member to take the assessment up to six times.

Implementation: DOL VETS, in coordination with DoD, will conduct a phased implementation of the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop. The Department of Labor has decided that from January through October 2012, the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop will be implemented only at those bases supported by DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators. This is based on the status of the pending TAP facilitation contract. Inverness Technologies provides contract facilitator support

to VETS. They are on a 12-month contract that runs through October 31, 2012. VETS will re-compete the TAP facilitation contract during FY 2012. If Inverness were to begin facilitating the redesigned workshop it would give them an unfair advantage in the competition for the new contract.

Pilot Phase: Implementation of the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop will begin with piloting of the new workshop at sites selected by DoD and Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Starting in February through April, 2012, the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop will be delivered at the following military bases:

- Army – Ft Bragg, Ft Belvoir, Ft Knox, Ft Drum
- Navy – NAS Jacksonville, NB San Diego
- Air Force – Travis AFB, Joint Base McGuire AFB
- Marine Corps – Quantico, MCAS Miramar
- Coast Guard – Cape May New Jersey

During the pilot phase, only those bases listed above will use any portion of the redesigned curriculum. DVOP/LVER facilitators, at sites other than the pilot sites, who have been trained on the new curriculum will continue to teach the old curriculum until directed to convert to the redesigned curriculum as part of the general implementation.

The new TAP Employment Workshop Participant Manual will be shipped to the specific pilot sites in early February 2012. The number of manuals shipped is based on projected 3-month workshop attendance at those sites as estimated by the military TAP managers.

DOL will evaluate the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop at each pilot site through surveys of participants, facilitators, and monitors and on-site assessment/Technical Assistance. Evaluation will result in a data synthesis and recommendations report. Based on this feedback, VETS National Office will determine the need for any revisions to the redesigned curriculum. Following incorporation of identified changes, and in coordination with DoD, VETS will begin general implementation of the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop at the other military bases supported by DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators. General implementation will start in March/April 2012.

General Implementation: VETS National Office is working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the military services TAP program managers to develop the detailed schedule for the conversion to the new workshop. A TAP site's conversion to the new workshop will depend on that base's ability to support the redesigned curriculum and the availability of trained DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators.

The military service headquarters will inform the base transition assistance managers when to convert to the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop.

Regional Administrators will inform State VETS staff of the sites in their states that will begin using the new workshop curriculum and the date of conversion. DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators are to continue delivering the old TAP Employment Workshop curriculum until specifically directed by state VETS staff to begin using the redesigned curriculum.

NVTI TAP Facilitator Training: DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators who did not attend the initial training conducted November 28 – December 2, 2011, will be trained on the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop at NVTI. The first TAP facilitation course at NVTI is scheduled for January 30 – February 3, 2012. This training is restricted to DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators who will augment facilitation at the pilot sites and high priority states as determined by the Regional Administrators and VETS National Office TAP Lead.

V. Actions Required:

A. VETS Regional Administrators for Veterans' Employment and Training (RAVETs) and Directors for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVETs) are to coordinate with the military TAP site managers within their states, and the TAP Employment Workshop facilitators to ensure a smooth implementation of the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop.

B. RAVETs are to provide VETS National Office with a list of military bases within their region that are supported by DVOP/LVER TAP facilitators. That list should indicate which bases have sufficient numbers of primary facilitators trained on the new curriculum to support conversion to the redesigned TAP Employment Workshop. The list should also indicate which bases do not have sufficient numbers of primary facilitators trained on the new curriculum and how many of the primary facilitators require training on the new curriculum. This list should be sent to the VETS National Office by February 29, 2012.

C. State administrators should review this VPL to ensure that all staff assigned as facilitators for TAP Employment Workshops are advised of the contents of this directive.

D. DVETs will be available for consultation and to provide technical assistance on questions related to the guidance issued in this VPL.

VI. Inquiries: States should refer questions to the appropriate DVET. DVETs or other VETS staff with questions should contact their RAVET. RAVETs may contact the TAP Program Lead at the National Office at (202) 693-4705.

VII. Expiration Date: Until superseded or rescinded.