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~ MISSION AND VISION OF MICHAEL E. DEBAKEY VA MEDICAL CENTER (MEDVAMC) ~

- To fulfill President Lincoln's promise “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans.

~ VA CORE VALUES ~

Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence (“I CARE”)

- **Integrity**: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

- **Commitment**: Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA’s mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

- **Advocacy**: Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

- **Respect**: Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

- **Excellence**: Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.
Promotion of value in the programs and services offered

- Our commitment is to Veterans by being responsive, respectful, trustworthy & compassionate.
- Working as a team to provide excellence in patient care, research & education.
- Accurate data and information for decision making as we practice good stewardship of resources while incorporating new & innovative ways to stay at the forefront of health care delivery.
- Effective and timely communications.
- Relationships with our veterans, staff, union partnership, volunteers, academic affiliates and corporate body.
- Diversity, dignity and the contributions of every member of our staff and volunteers.
- An ethics based framework for business and clinical decision making.
- The discovery of new knowledge through research.

~ VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE (VRS) ~

Program History

Houston MEDVAMC Veterans Industries program was organized in mid-1970s. Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) Program began in 1994 and was staffed by Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Psychology Services, but since 2001, VRS program operates under the Mental Health Care Line.

~ MISSION OF VRS ~

The VRS demonstrates its commitment to the MEDVAMC mission via the care it takes to provide individualized, accessible, high quality care to the Veterans, by recognizing and providing growth opportunities for employees and providing training for the next generation of vocational professionals.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Service is committed to assisting Veterans with psychiatric and/or physical disabilities in reaching their highest level of vocational productivity.
~ VISION OF VRS ~
All Veterans will be given chance to improve their quality of life through optimum VRS.

~ GOALS FOR VRS ~
Our goal is to assist Veterans in evaluating their employment future, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and guiding them through to a successful vocational adjustment by:

- Providing structured vocational evaluations
- Improving pre-vocational skills (through adhering to a work schedule, working cooperatively with others, accepting supervision, doing quality piecework, etc.)
- Reducing psychiatric and physical symptoms
- Preventing hospitalization
- Improving self-esteem and enhancing quality of life
- Returning veterans to workplace
- Assuring that no conflict of interest exists or occurs, as the Work-For-Pay (WORK RESTORATION) Program operates within strict compliance with MEDVAMC’s Code of Ethical Behavior
- Providing services at no cost to veteran

~ STAFF INTRODUCTIONS ~
Sara Bailey, PhD
Director, Community Integration – Vocational Rehabilitation Program
Bldg. 121 Rm 173
713-791-1414 x 7453

Vocational Rehabilitation is a section of Mental Health – Community Integration Program (MH-CIP). Dr. Sara Bailey, Community Integration Program Director, is a Licensed Psychologist and certified by the APA College of Professional Psychology in the treatment of alcohol and other psychoactive substance use disorders. Dr. Bailey has expertise in the area of PTSD and is a Licensed Sex Offender Treatment Provider.
Mr. Reed, Coordinator of Vocational Rehabilitation provides leadership and guidance of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services day to day operations for the Therapeutic Supported Employment Services Program and leads the Vocational Rehabilitation section in the performance of their daily duties. He also addresses Veteran grievances in WORK RESTORATION programs. Mr. Reed is a Retired Veteran of the United States Air Force.

Mr. Frazier is responsible for the management of WORK RESTORATION pay programs and Financial Operations. As Lead Vocational Rehabilitation Program Manager, he co-coordinates leadership of VRS daily operations and maintains regular communication with Program Coordinator and Director. In addition, Mr. Frazier also addresses Veteran grievances in WORK RESTORATION programs.

Mr. Adams is responsible for Veteran orientation/assessment, treatment planning, case management, education, Job Readiness Training (JRT) group, and for referrals to Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source, Department of Assistive & Rehabsilative Services (DARS), Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E), and other community agencies. He is responsible for assisting veterans to transition from the CWT-TW work program to competitive employment in the community. He assists with identifying potential employers, speak to potential employers on the veteran’s behalf, provide motivational support, transport veteran to and from job search and job interviews, and provide job retention to veterans who are working in the community. He addresses Veteran grievances in WORK RESTORATION programs. Mr. Adams is a Veteran of the United States Air Force.

Mr. Charles works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. He facilitates placement of Veterans with Poly-Trauma into community employment. Mr. Charles is a Veteran of the United States Army.
Jessica Dawson, MHA, CTRS Bldg. 121 Rm 156
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist 713-791-1414 x 5516
Ms. Dawson is responsible for Veteran orientation/assessment, treatment planning, case management, education, Job Readiness Training (JRT) group, and for referrals to Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source, Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E), and other community agencies. She is responsible for assisting veterans to transition from the CWT-TW work program to competitive employment in the community. She assists with identifying potential employers, speak to potential employers on the veteran’s behalf, provide motivational support, transport Veteran to and from job search and job interviews, and provide job retention to Veterans who are working in the community. She addresses Veteran grievances in WORK RESTORATION programs.

Joseph Edwards, Jr., M.S, CRC
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Bldg. 121 Rm 126
Supported Employment Specialist & Trainer 713-791-1414 x 4578
Mr. Edwards works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. He facilitates placement of Veterans with serious mental illness into community employment. Mr. Edwards is also the mentor site trainer for CWT-SE for VISN 16. Mr. Edwards is a Veteran of the United States Army.

Aletha Jacobs, M.S. Bldg. 121 Rm 161
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist 713-791-1414 x 6813
Ms. Jacobs is responsible for veteran orientation/assessment, treatment planning, case management, education, Job Readiness Training (JRT) group, and for referrals to Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source, Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E), and other community agencies. She is responsible for assisting Veterans to transition from the CWT-TW work program to competitive employment in the community.

She assists with identifying potential employers, speak to potential employers on the Veteran’s behalf, provide motivational support, transport Veterans to and from job search and job interviews, and provide job retention to Veterans who are working in the community.

LaDonna Latham, M.S, CRC
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Bldg. 121 Rm174
Supported Employment Specialist 713-791-1414 x 2311
Ms. Latham works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. She facilitates placement of homeless Veterans into community employment.
Charles Miles, M.A.  Bldg.100 Rm 2B 123
Transitional Work Experience Program Manager  713-794-7437
Mr. Miles is responsible for daily operations of Transitional Work (TW) program. He is responsible for Veteran work assignments and addresses Veteran grievances in the TW program. Mr. Miles is responsible for maintaining vendor satisfaction, and counseling Veterans regarding work adjustment issues. He participates in Veteran orientation/assessment, treatment planning, staffing, and Veteran education. In addition, Mr. Miles addresses Veteran grievances in WORK RESTORATION programs. Mr. Miles is a Veteran of the United States Army.

Rachel Lasich, M. Ed
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  Bldg. 121 Rm 126
Supported Employment Specialist  713-791-1414 x 5661
Ms. Lasich works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. She facilitates placement of Veterans with serious mental illness into community employment.

Clarence Mitchell, B.S.
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  Bldg. 121 Rm 158
Employment Specialist  713-791-1414 x 4451
Mr. Mitchell is responsible for Veteran orientation/assessment, treatment planning, case management, education, Job Readiness Training (JRT) group, and for referrals to Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source, Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E), and other community agencies. He assists with preparation and placement of Veterans in competitive employment. He is responsible for assisting Veterans to transition from the CWT-TW work program to competitive employment in the community. He assists with identifying potential employers, speak to potential employers on the Veteran’s behalf, provide motivational support, transport veteran to and from job search and job interviews, and provide job retention to Veterans who are working in the community. He addresses Veteran grievances in WORK RESTORATION programs. Mr. Mitchell is a Veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

Pedro Peña III, M.A.
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  Bldg. 121 Rm 124
Supported Employment Specialist  713-791-1414 x 6346
Mr. Peña works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. He facilitates placement of Veterans with serious mental illness into community employment. Mr. Pena is a Veteran of the United States Air Force.
Anthony Samuel, M.S., M.A.  
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  
Supported Employment Specialist  
Bldg. 121 Rm 150  
713-791-1414 x 4740  
Mr. Samuel works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. He facilitates placement of Homeless Veterans into community employment. Mr. Samuel is a Veteran of the United Stated Army.

Lyn Smith-Ricks, B.S.  
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  
Bldg. 121 Rm 147  
713-791-1414 x 5132  
Ms. Smith-Ricks works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. She facilitates placement of Homeless Veterans into community employment. Ms. Smith-Ricks is a Veteran of the United States Army.

Karen West, M.S, CRC  
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  
Supported Employment Specialist  
Bldg. 121 Rm 125  
713-791-1414 x 4601  
Ms. West works in Compensated Work Therapy-Supported Employment (CWT-SE) program. She facilitates placement of Veterans with serious mental illness into community employment.

Avis Williams, B.A.  
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist  
Incentive Therapy Program Manager  
Bldg. 100 Rm 2B-125  
713-791-1414 x 5060  
Ms. Williams is responsible for daily operations of the Incentive Therapy (IT) program. She is responsible for Veteran work assignments and addresses Veteran grievances in IT. Ms. Williams is responsible for Work-For-Pay orientation/assessment, treatment planning, staffing, case management and Veteran education and payroll administration and management.
* Seriously Mentally Ill Clients = Schizophrenic, Bipolar, Psychosis

** Employee Development Services
~ CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE ~

1. A MEDVAMC physician or provider refers eligible Veterans for VA services to a Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) Orientation, which is conducted Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 1300 hours in Building 121.
   
   A. Veterans with substance use disorders should be involved in one of the outpatient substance dependence treatment programs.

   B. Veterans with other psychiatric disorders have to be stable in the sense of having no active psychoses. Veterans with active, serious mental illness (including Schizophrenia, Psychoses, and Bipolar Disorder) are also eligible for Supported Employment services.

   C. Veterans need to have as their goal to seek competitive employment in order to be referred for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

2. During Orientation, the Veteran completes a Pre-Assessment form, and is scheduled to meet with the Program Coordinator or designee for an assessment and placement into Vocational Assistance, Community Based Employment Services or Enriched Transitional Work.

3. During Orientation, the veteran is informed of the requirement and evidence of a TB (tuberculosis) test. That proof must be entered into veteran’s file in the computer by referral source. The Veteran also is required to have a negative urine specimen in order to be referred for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

4. If there is any question about the appropriateness of the Veteran for participation in the Work Restoration Program, Veteran’s case is discussed at the assessment. The decision of the Program Coordinator or designee is final.

6. Vocational Rehabilitation Work Restoration Program does not use seclusion or restraint.

7. This program is provided at NO COST TO VETERAN.

8. PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROGRAM IS VOLUNTARY.
~ VETERAN’S RIGHTS ~

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees will respect and support your rights as a Veteran. VHA is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. VHA plans to make your experience as pleasant for you as possible. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined below.

Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient representative if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

RESPECT AND NONDISCRIMINATION

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal and religious values.

- You or someone that you choose have the right to keep and spend your own money. You have the right to receive an accounting of MEDVAMC held funds.

- Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. If medication changes are needed, staff will discuss with you; and if assistance is needed, will assist you in contacting your physician.

- Inpatients or long-term care residents must wear your own clothes when working in the WORK RESTORATION programs.

- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients and staff, you are asked to respect other patients and staff, and to follow facility rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please, immediately, report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- You will be given information about health benefits that you can receive. The information will be provided in a way that you can understand.

- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (i.e., state public health reporting). You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your records. This will be provided, except in rare situations where your MEDVAMC physician feels that that information will be harmful to you.
In that situation, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your MEDVAMC provider. A Release of Information Form 10-5345 will be filled out when a veteran is requesting information to be released.

PARTICIPATION IN TREATMENT DECISIONS

- You, and any person(s) you choose, will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information that you can understand about benefits and risks of treatment. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care, but you have the responsibility to understand the possible results to your health. If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to notify the treatment team.

- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines, including over-the-counter and herbals, and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you do not understand something about your care. This will help in providing you the best care possible.

- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. You may consult with MEDVA Medical Center’s Ethics Committee and/or other staff knowledgeable about health care ethics.

- If you or Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused, or exploited, you will receive help.

- You have the right to choose whether you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of research will be identified, and there will be no pressure on you to participate.

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Our goal is to give excellent customer service, but we know that you may occasionally have questions or concerns. Written notification of actions is available when requested. Lodging a complaint will in no way compromise your medical care or your right to future treatment. All parties will comply with VHA policies and procedures regarding patient rights. To find solutions to your concerns, please take the following steps:
**Level 1**

Discuss your concerns first with the staff person with whom you are having concerns or with your VRS Case Manager, IT or TW Program Manager, or with your elected Veterans Representative (who will talk with VRS staff on your behalf). VRS staff should be able to respond to you and/or the Veterans Representative within two working days.

*If not resolved, go to Level 2.*

**Level 2**

Discuss your concerns with your VRS Coordinator, Mr. Joseph Reed at ext.27554. Mr. Reed should be able to respond to you within two working days. If you believe your concern has not been addressed you can request to meet with Dr. Sara Bailey, CIP Program Director.

*If not resolved, go to Level 3.*

**Level 3**

Notify Dr. Sara Bailey that you wish to go to next level. She will direct you to an available and appropriate executive level staff. This Executive should be able to respond to you within five working days.

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**~ VETERAN’S RESPONSIBILITIES ~**

Your compliance with the following list of responsibilities is necessary to assure the highest quality care. It shows the importance of your contribution to your care. You are responsible for:

- Cooperating with your treatment team and bringing concerns about your care to them.
- Following safety rules and posted signs.
- Being considerate and respectful to all staff and of all Veterans.
- Preventing harm to yourself, to other Veterans, and to staff by your actions. All weapons are prohibited. Abusive behavior will not be tolerated.
- Alerting staff when another Veteran is having difficulty.
- Not interfering with treatment of other Veterans.
• Attending all of your scheduled appointments on time.
• Informing your visitors to be considerate of all other Veterans and all MEDVA Medical Center personnel and to observe visiting hours.
• Understanding and being professional if you encounter a delay.

If you have any questions regarding these rights and responsibilities, please contact VRS staff or the Office of Consumer Affairs at 713-794-7783 or 7884.

Advocates or other assistance are available upon request. Advocacy, Inc. is available for intake appointments Monday through Friday 9am – 12:30pm. Call 713-974-7691, 1-800-880-0821 or visit their website @ www.advocacyinc.org.

~ PROGRAM DESCRIPTION ~

Vocational Rehabilitation Work-For-Pay (WORK RESTORATION) programs provide high quality, easily accessible services to eligible veterans with physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. WORK RESTORATION includes:

• Vocational Assistance
• Community Based Employment Services (CBES)
• Enriched Transitional Work (CWT/TW)
• Compensated Work Therapy/Supported Employment (CWT/SE)

WORK RESTORATION programs provide work evaluation for vocational problems. Work hardening, job readiness training, and job placement are available to all veterans who enter the program. Gainful employment, increased independence, and enhanced self-esteem are all examples of positive outcomes achieved by veterans who participate in WORK RESTORATION programs.

WORK RESTORATION staff works in conjunction with VA staff including the veteran's primary care clinician, to help insure that other important needs are met. These could include transportation, housing, medical treatment, and disability compensation to mention a few. All Veterans enrolled in WORK RESTORATION are assigned a Case Manager and agree to adhere to an acceptable treatment plan. Case Managers will assist in the coordination of services. This may include talking with in-hospital worksite supervisors, counselors, and medical personnel in the Veteran's clinical program, as necessary.
~ PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ~

The primary objectives of WORK RESTORATION are:

1. To provide structured evaluations to referred veterans.
2. To improve pre-vocational skills (ability to adhere to a work schedule, to work cooperatively with others, to accept supervision, etc.).
3. To build work hardening and tolerance.
4. To improve technical skills, whenever possible.
5. To prepare the veteran for returning to workforce, where applicable.
6. To help reduce psychiatric symptoms and need for hospitalization.
7. To improve overall functioning, raise self-esteem, and enhance veterans quality of life.

~ PROGRAM COMPONENTS ~

VRS Work-For-Pay (WORK RESTORATION) program consists of following components:

**Vocational Assistance:** Vocational Assistance provides help in determining vocational needs/goals and works jointly with you in writing a Vocational Plan to help you achieve these goals. These sessions can also include resume assistance and referrals to possible employers. Vocational Counselors are also able to facilitate referrals to VR & E, DARS, Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source, and other community groups depending on eligibility.

**Compensated Work Therapy /Enriched Transitional Work (CWT/TW):**
TW positions are designed to reflect the realities of competitive workplace.TW veterans will demonstrate sufficient motivation and responsible work behaviors to merit a job with greater responsibility, higher compensation, and reduced supervision. Veterans in TW are assigned to perform special projects that have been established through agreements with the MEDVAMC. Veterans work under direct MEDVAMC employee supervision and indirect TW supervision. Veterans must be willing to seek competitive employment while working TW. The primary goal of TW is to assist you in finding employment. Please note that you must be ready to seek competitive employment once you are placed in TW.
Community Based Employment Employment Services (CBES):
Community Based Employment Services (CBES) provides individual flexible vocational support designed for each Veteran based on their strengths, interests, and support needs. Veterans are offered community-based employment support that is tailored to each Veteran providing a level of support necessary to secure and maintain competitive employment in their local communities. Veterans are eligible for CBES if: (1) The Veteran is eligible for CWT services, (2) The Veteran's immediate vocational goal is to work in a competitive, community based job (3) The Veteran has a history of sporadic employment, difficulty maintaining a job, difficulty initiating and following through on their job search, or is not able to obtain competitive work independently. Needs more assistance than Vocational Assistance or Transitional Work can provide. CBES will provide services to all qualified Mental Health Programs.

Compensated Work Therapy/Supported Employment (CWT/SE): CWT/SE is designed to help Veterans with serious mental illness, such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, and other psychoses, and to seek and maintain employment within the community. CWT/SE specializes in developing opportunities for Veterans to work at their highest level based on individual strengths, abilities, and preferences.

Discharge Planning involves meeting with your Case Manager and WORK RESTORATION Program Manager to access your readiness for independent and successful functioning in community. Your effort and progress toward finding competitive employment is reviewed along with your progress toward meeting other identified goals of your Treatment Plan. The Completion Date for VRS Program will be established between you and VRS Staff. Discharge planning is an ongoing process and begins the day you start WORK RESTORATION program.

Job Readiness Training consists of nine topics to assist you in obtaining competitive employment. The modules are: 1.) Starting the Job Search, 2.) Job Search Techniques, 3.) Writing Effective Résumés, 4.) Interviewing with Confidence, 5.) Success on the Job, 6.) Ethics at Work, 7) Money Matters, 8.) Sexual Harassment, and 9.) Best 10 ¼ Tips for People. These areas are addressed in your weekly TW case management meetings with your TW Case Manger.

Referral services are available for training/school opportunities in the local community. Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source provides job placement assistance on site three days per week (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday) and the other two days per week at nearby locations. (There is a list of ten Houston locations of The Work Source not to exclude that there is a Veteran’s Representatives in Bldg. 121. This list is updated periodically.)
~ VRS MEETINGS ~

All WORK RESTORATION veterans are required to attend the following group meetings. Being late or failing to attend may result in a one-day suspension, which could be administered the following workday.

Meetings:

- **Work-For-Pay Meetings:** You must attend all veteran related WORK RESTORATION meetings. You are invited to comment on your care and to submit suggestions. Veterans are encouraged to use the "Suggestion Box", Community Meetings, and elected Veteran’s Representative to comment on program activities. VRS staff review submitted suggestions regularly. Program problems and subjects raised by Veterans may be addressed during community meetings, staff meetings, or individual sessions.

- **TW Case Management Meeting:** TW Veterans meet every 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Monday, from 11am to 12pm, in designated locations.

Surveys: Semi-Annual Customer Satisfaction Surveys are available for you to provide suggestions and comments. Your suggestions will assist WORK RESTORATION Staff in improving the program.

- **Community Meetings:** TW Veterans meet the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm, in Building 108(Wellness Center). You are invited to comment on your care and to submit suggestions. Veterans are encouraged to use the "Suggestion Box", Community Meetings, and elected Veteran’s Representative to comment on program activities. VRS staff review submitted suggestions regularly. Program problems and subjects raised by veterans may be addressed during community meetings, staff meetings, or individual sessions.

- **Veteran Treatment Meetings:** You must participate in your assigned treatment program in order to remain in the WORK RESTORATION program. You must attend your clinical appointments as a condition of your WORK RESTORATION involvement. Failure to do so will result in termination from WORK RESTORATION program.

- **You may request evening appointments, whenever possible, from your clinical programs, in order to minimize interference with WORK**
RESTORATION program work therapy. You must also attend WORK RESTORATION support group meetings.

~ GENERAL INFORMATION ~

**Daily Sign In Sheets:** TW daily sign-in sheets and payroll summary sheets reflect hours worked. TW payroll summary sheets are generated at the end of the work shift on the 15th and last day of each month (or the first working day after those days).

**Injury/Illness:** In the event of illness, be sure to notify immediately, both your worksite supervisor and your VRS Case manager. Injuries, which occur on the job, must be reported immediately to your worksite supervisor, if practical, and immediately go to MEDVAMC Triage for treatment. Failure to do so may result in your termination from WORK RESTORATION program.

**Personal Belongings:** Valuables such as backpacks, purses, wallets, and important papers should not be kept in the work area. The WORK RESTORATION/MEDVAMC will not be responsible for lost or stolen items. In keeping with accepted industry practices, radios, I-Pod's, MP-3 players, and other electronic equipment are not permitted in work areas. Headsets are not allowed in MEDVAMC. The use of cell phones are permitted while on break and lunch. They will not be used while performing your duties in the TW Program.

**Personal Hygiene:** You must maintain good personal hygiene. This includes regular bathing and clean clothes. Veterans are expected to dress in an appropriate manner that is appropriate to their respective worksites. No revealing clothing, sexually suggestive, pornographic or any illegal drug paraphernalia items are allowed on clothing worn. No shorts, sandals or open toed shoes are allowed.

**Name Badges:** When working, your WORK RESTORATION Name Badge must be worn visibly at all times. Display badge with picture showing to public, above your waist, not on your sleeve, and below your neck.

**Telephones:** Telephones are available for business use. Secure permission from WORK RESTORATION staff member before using one and limit calls to five minutes.

**Alcohol/Drug Policy:** Therapeutic Supported Employment Services is a drug-free program as is MEDVAMC. Anyone found to be drinking or using illegal drugs while enrolled in the Work-for-Pay program will be suspended from TW until a negative urinalysis (UA) is confirmed (minimum of 3 days). Anyone that continues using alcohol or illegal drugs following suspension will be dis-enrolled,
and will require a treatment plan review (likely to include a customized contract) with Vocational Rehabilitation case manager, Substance Dependence case manager, Work-For-Pay Program Manager, or his/her representative prior to any re-enrollment in a Work-For-Pay program. The veteran will also be required to obtain a new consult. If you now have or have had an alcohol or drug abuse problem, it is mandatory that you attend substance abuse program while assigned in any WORK RESTORATION program.

**Smoking:** It is MEDVAMC hospital policy that no smoking will be permitted within any of the buildings. Special smoking areas have been established. Designated Smoking areas are located at the rear of the hospital.

~ **ABSENCES** ~

Excused time off will be granted for attending appointments, etc. These appointments may be with a member of your treatment team, other agencies, etc. All Veterans should notify TW staff ahead of time, when possible, if your absence will be for more than 24 hours.

**TW Veterans** must notify the VRS Case Manager of time needed off and notify their worksite supervisor of all meetings that will take them away from their assigned worksites.

Three (3) consecutive absences (no call/no show) will result in dismissal from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Even though excused, abusing time off could result in delaying your advancement and could cause dismissal from WORK RESTORATION programs. If you have a need for extended time off, contact a WORK RESTORATION staff member to discuss options. Decisions regarding extended time off will be made on an individual basis.

~ **CALL-IN PROCEDURES** ~

Veterans in WORK RESTORATION programs, Enriched Transitional Work (TW) are required to inform the VRS Case Manager and their worksite supervisor in the event that they are unable to report to work for any reason.

 Calls should be made within two (2) hours of your start time on the day in which the absence occurs. Veterans who call both their assigned worksite and WORK RESTORATION supervisors within two (2) hours of your start time will be given an excused absence from work for that day. A call must be made for every day missed, unless you make it clear that you will out longer. All absences must be
written on your timesheet. If the Veteran does not call within two (2) hours of your start time, then Veteran will be considered a "no-show" for that day.

Three (3) no shows, either consecutive or non-consecutive during TW participation may result in a UA, if the Veteran has an alcohol or drug problem and/or use is suspected. In the absence of a positive UA, Veteran will meet with treatment team (relevant staff), and a determination will be made regarding future participation.

Veterans with a pattern of absences from work therapy (as determined by the VRS Case Manager and TW Program Manager) will require a meeting with the treatment team, and a determination will be made regarding future participation.

All of the following group meetings are mandatory: Work-For-Pay, Case Management, Community Meetings, Vocational Team Meetings, Veteran Treatment Meeting, and job search with Texas Veterans Commission / The Work Source Office

~ HEALTH SCREENING ~

Veterans with medical problems should report these to WORK RESTORATION staff at time of their intake evaluation. Veterans with medical problems, which limit their ability to perform work and who lack a recent physical exam, may be required to obtain a physical exam in order to determine extent of their physical limitations.

Inoculations against such illnesses as hepatitis B, influenza, polio, tetanus, or other infectious diseases are provided by the medical center. TB testing is required for participation in WORK RESTORATION.

~ EARNINGS ~

Veterans assigned in a therapeutic work program, Transitional Work participants (TW) are not employees of the MEDVAMC. In WORK RESTORATION programs, sick leave, annual leave, travel pay, and holiday pay do not exist.

January 1, 1999, a Federal law was passed which requires all recipients of federal payments be made through Direct Deposit (to a checking or savings account). To establish a checking or savings account, you must have either an active, valid Texas ID or a Texas Driver’s License. The Work-For-Pay program (WORK RESTORATION) is a therapeutic program including Transitional Work (TW). A therapeutic goal may entail repairing debt and establishing a good credit history. Many businesses today will not hire you if you do not have a checking or savings account.
Your direct deposit must be established in Austin before money will be deposited into your account. It may take a week for Austin to activate your direct deposit once we have faxed your paperwork. The direct deposit form that your bank needs to fill out is with the TW Program Manager.

You may choose the bank or credit union of your choice for your direct deposit. If you have bad debt problems talk to us about joining the credit union. Once your direct deposit is established and later you wish to change banks, you will need to contact the TW Program Manager for instructions. **Direct pay must be deposited into your new account before you may close your old account.**

If you have an account with Smart Financial Credit Union and you want to close the account, you must get a signed form from the TW Program Manager. Smart Financial will close your account once all your pay has been received in your account.

**CHECK YOUR ACCOUNT TO SEE IF YOUR PAYROLL HAS BEEN DEPOSITED BEFORE YOU WITHDRAW ANY FUNDS. TW IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY REASON IF YOUR PAYROLL IS DEPOSITED LATE INTO YOUR ACCOUNT. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE TO ENSURE THERE ARE ADEQUATE FUNDS IN YOUR ACCOUNT TO PREVENT OVERDRAFT FEES!**

If you cannot open a Savings or Checking account, you will not be able to work in the Work-For-Pay program.

**WORKSITE** You will be expected to be at your assigned worksite and remain there for the time agreed upon between you and your supervisor. You are responsible for notifying both your worksite supervisor or the VRS Case Manager if you are unable to report to or leave work for any reason. If you leave work for group therapy, a doctor's appointment, etc., that time cannot be included on your timesheet. The reason for your absence must be documented on your timesheet by the supervisor.

**THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE IS PROOF OF YOUR ATTENDANCE.**

**Daily,** it is your responsibility to hand-scan and sign in before starting work, then hand-scan and sign out at the end of your shift. **Do not sign out when you sign in.** If you do not follow scanning and signing procedures, you may be locked out of scanner and not be paid for that period.

**TIMESHEET HOURS** worked per day may not exceed (8) eight. Hours worked per pay period for TW may not exceed (64) sixty-four. TW veterans, before you may work over 64 hours, approval must be requested by the Worksite Supervisor, and it must be approved by the TW Program Manager and the
Worksite Supervisor in the service where you work. Your supervisor will be responsible for maintaining and certifying your timesheet so your pay may be computed accurately. It is your responsibility to check the timesheet to make sure it is correct before signing it.

**No changes will be made once you and the supervisor sign your timesheet. Timesheets not signed by both the supervisor and veteran will not be processed for pay. Your pay may be delayed for five business working days.**

**PAYROLL RECORDS** The direct deposit payroll sheet must be signed every payday. Your future pay may be delayed until the payroll is signed. Your pay may be delayed for five business working days.

Veterans in TW are paid on or around the 11th and 26th of each month. If these dates occur on the weekend or holiday, payroll will be paid on the next business day and is based on the current minimum wage standards.

Your payroll will be deposited to your account that you have been established with the bank or credit union of your choice.

If you leave Work-For-Pay program prematurely for any reason, (i.e. regular or irregular discharge), your last pay will be processed on next regular scheduled payday and will not be paid early. You may not ask for special pay even if you leave the program prematurely. Your last pay will be sent to your direct deposit account.

**NON-SERVICE CONNECTED PENSION** Public Law 99-576, the *Veterans Benefits Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986*, states that for Non-Service Connected veterans (NSC) drawing a pension, the money earned in Work-For-Pay program is not counted as income. What you earn in the Work-For-Pay program will not be deducted from your NSC pension.

Money earned in WORK RESTORATION program will be considered income in computing SSI or SSDI benefits. Questions about the effects of WORK RESTORATION pay or other sources of compensation should be addressed to a Social Security representative.
~ RELEASE OF YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS ~

How to See and Get Copies

Under Freedom of Information Act, you may access your official records. However, your request must be in writing, and you must reasonably describe what you want out of your medical records. Here is something to keep in mind: There may be a fee for this service. If your request is large, you might have to pay to get your copies.

- At home: You may write to MEDVAMC requesting copies of your record. It takes about ten to 14 working days to process your request.
- In person: Go to Medical Records, (Release of Information), Room 1B-3041B04, sign a Form 10-5345, and describe on form information you want. Processing time is again ten to 14 days.

There are four types of access that you may request:

1) Personally to review your records and/or to get copies relating to yourself.

2) Copies to be sent to a third party, for example to DARS, or to your insurance, etc.

3) An amendment to be made to some information in your record.

4) All releases made of your record, including when and to whom it was released.

Check with your Case Manager if you need more information. You will find he/she can be a big help in getting what you need.

~ CONFLICT RESOLUTION ~

A conflict is when you disagree with what someone has said or with what someone has done. Many times, conflict is due to poor communication between both parties. If you have a conflict with someone, following are suggestions on how to handle your feelings and the situation:

- a. Try to remove yourself from the conflict by getting up and walking around. If asked what you are doing, just reply that you need time to calm down.
- b. Take deep breaths to help calm yourself.
c. When you feel you can talk to the person with whom you had the conflict, tell them how you are feeling.

d. If you do not feel you can talk to the person you had a conflict with that day, then find someone else to talk to about your feelings. Remember that most conflicts involve poor communication between both parties, so do not just blame the other person. Look and see what you could have done differently.

~ GRADUATION/TERMINATION FROM WORK-FOR-PAY ~

Length of participation in WORK RESTORATION program is determined on an individual basis. Participants will either graduate or be terminated from WORK RESTORATION Program when:

a. Veteran decides to leave program before anticipated discharge date.

b. Veteran fails to comply with job search procedures.

c. Veteran fails to comply with his/her treatment plan or is unable to develop appropriate work skills/habits.

d. Veteran demonstrates criminal or inappropriate behavior, i.e., theft, assault, sexual harassment or abuse, fighting, threatening behaviors, etc.

e. Veteran has met goals of his/her treatment plan.

f. Veteran has obtained gainful competitive employment in community.

g. Veteran receives an irregular discharge, disenrollment, or suspension from another program from which he/she is receiving treatment, i.e. substance dependency.

Re-admission Policy

Veterans who obtain employment or meet their rehabilitation goal and wish to return to the program within 30 days of discharge will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the veteran’s treatment team (relevant staff). Veterans wishing to return to program after 30 days will require a new consult.

Veterans leaving the program without employment or without meeting their rehabilitation goal may be readmitted with a new consult (provided the discharge is not covered under the Alcohol/Drug Policy or Call-In Procedures sections of this Handbook) within 2 years of their discharge date.
If you have been discharged due to disruptive or criminal behavior, you may not be considered for re-admission for up to one year. Re-admission decisions are made by VRS Staff on a case-by-case basis and are based on such factors as motivation to work, mental stability, compliance with treatment, and progress toward established goals.

**Hospitalization**

If you are hospitalized for more than one (1) week or are placed on “sick leave status”, you must have a release "to return to duty" from your attending physician before returning to work therapy. If hospitalization or “sick leave” exceeds 15 days, your file may be closed due to inactivity. It is imperative that you keep your VRS Case Manager and your worksite supervisor updated.

**Probationary Period**

Upon entry into WORK RESTORATION program, you will be on a probationary status for 15 days. You may be discharged for medical/psychiatric instability, non-compliance with veteran clinical therapy, excessive absences, no shows, poor interpersonal skills, recurring admissions to the hospital, or failure to handle money as required.

**Disciplinary Action**

Violations of MEDVAMC hospital policies may result in disciplinary action. Theft, sexual abuse/harassment, or abusive language will not be tolerated. A professional attitude and appropriate conduct should be maintained at all times.

If your attendance, conduct, or performance becomes unsatisfactory, creates an unsafe work environment, or is disruptive to rehabilitation of WORK RESTORATION, you will be discharged from the program. Outbursts, threats, or acts of violence WILL NOT be tolerated. Problems should be discussed with a WORK RESTORATION staff member. Illegal activity will not be condoned in the VRS Work-For-Pay program, i.e. sexual harassment/abuse. Incidents of illegal activity will be actively pursued and will result in dismissal from program.

**~GUIDELINES FOR OUTSTANDING WORKER OF MONTH~**

1. Any staff member in Vocational Rehabilitation Sections (VRS) or any worksite supervisor may nominate a veteran to the TW Program Manager, and any TW Veteran may nominate a TW veteran by writing that veteran’s name on appropriate form located outside Room 2B-123 and placing it in the Suggestion Box.
2. Veteran nominated should have a minimum of one month in the WORK RESTORATION program before he/she may be nominated.

3. Veteran’s attendance and participation in all phases of WORK RESTORATION program will be considered (Case Management, Community Meetings, Job Search, etc.)

~ RULES FOR MONTHLY COMMUNITY MEETING ~

1. Meetings should start and end on time.
2. Attendees should be punctual.
3. Everyone should have opportunity to participate.
4. We will listen courteously to other veterans’ ideas.
5. Members should not interrupt each other.
6. No one person should dominate discussion.
7. Ideas (not people) should be discussed or evaluated.
8. Veterans should get along with each other and respect each other’s opinions and avoid negative comments toward any individual.
9. Veterans share resources, skills and information, and experiences.
10. Assignments, if given, should be completed and discussed at next meeting.
11. Decisions should be reached by consensus.

~ VETERANS’ REPRESENTATIVE ~

Veterans in TW WORK RESTORATION programs select the Veterans’ Representative each month. He/she must have been in WORK RESTORATION program at least one month. You may nominate anyone you feel that would represent you well. After all nominations have been made, nominees are voted on, and veteran receiving the most votes is the Veterans’ Representative until the next community meeting.
TERM LIMITATIONS: A veteran may only serve three (3) times.

Veterans’ Representative is the spokesperson for WORK RESTORATION veterans. In general, he/she will be available to hear statements of concern and, if appropriate, offer ideas for resolving concern or recommend action (procedure) to take in order to get information to resolve the concern.

Veterans’ Representative will approach the TW Program Manager or any other WORK RESTORATION Staff person as necessary for discussion on matters related to programming and veteran issues.

Serving as Veterans’ Representative is an honor and responsibility. It is recommended that this honor be included on résumés and applications of veteran in the future.

~ MY SUGGESTION~

We want to hear how we may continue to improve our services to you. Tell us how we are doing by completing a Suggestion Form on any plain paper of your choice and placing it the Suggestion Box outside the Program Manager’s Office.

The Suggestion Box is kept locked at all times, and suggestions are removed regularly and read by VRS Staff. Additionally, appropriate suggestions are read at Monthly Community Meeting.

Thank you for your help

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Hours of Operation
Monday through Friday
Building 121
7:30am-4pm
713-791-1414 Ext. 7554

~ TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE ~

- Transportation assistance is available for those Veterans working in WORK RESTORATION.

- You may be eligible to receive transportation assistance while working the CWT/TW programs. We want to help your needs and ease strain of a financial hardship.

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Once you are assigned to a WORK RESTORATION program, transportation assistance may continue as long as you are here every day that you are assigned to work and that you work at least four hours per day. However, once you receive a direct deposit for $50.00 or more, transportation assistance will stop.

If your first payday is less than $50.00, and you have been here every day since being assigned, we will consider extending receiving transportation assistance for one more payday.

You will NOT be billed for this transportation assistance. You WILL NOT pay it back. This is something we are doing for you to help you to maintain stability.

Transportation assistance will NOT be available for veterans who are NOT participating in Vocational Rehabilitation Therapy clinics or in WORK RESTORATION program

~ HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS ~

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SECTIONS (VRS) STAFF**

Dwayne Adams..........Bldg 121 Room 159................. 713-791-1414 x 24581
Sara Bailey............ Bldg 121 Room 173................. 713-791-1414 x 27453
Clifton Charles........Bldg 100 Room 2B-111............. 713-791-1414 x 25401
Jessica Dawson .......Bldg 121 Room 156 ................. 713-791-1414-x 25516
Joseph Edwards, Jr. ..Bldg 121 Room 126............... 713-791-1414 x 24578
Herman Frazier........Bldg 100 Room 2B-109............. 713-791-1414 x 24449
Aletha Jacobs.........Bldg 121 Room 123............... 713-791-1414 x 26813
Rachel Lasich.........Bldg 121 Room 126............... 713-791-1414 x 25661
LaDonna Latham.......Bldg 121 Room 174.............. 713- 791-1414x 22311
Clarence Mitchell.....Bldg 121 Room 158.............. 713-791-1414 x 24451
Charles Miles..........Bldg 100 Room 2B-123.......... 713-791-1414 x 27437
Pedro Peña............Bldg 121 Room 124............ 713-791-1414 x 26346
Alice Postell ........Bldg 121 Room 160 ............ 713- 791-1414x 23082
Joseph Reed..........Bldg 121 Room 163............ 713-791-1414x 27554
Anthony Samuel ......Bldg 121 Room 150 .............713-791- 1414 x24740
Lyn Smith-Ricks ………Bldg 121 Room 147 ………………… 713-791-1414 x25132
Karen West………………Bldg 121 Room 125 ………………… 713-791-1414 x 24601
Avis Williams……………Bldg 100 Room 2B-125…………..713- 791-1414 x 25060
Kerry Williams………… Bldg 121 Lobby…………………...713-791-1414 x 27968

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION
Ms. Myeshia Wilcox Bldg 121 ………………………………..(Tuesdays & Thursdays Only)

HOSPITAL LISTINGS
Admissions Office 713-791-1414–x3789
Chaplain Service .................................................................................................................. 713-794-7125
Consumer Affairs .................................................................................................................. 713-794-7883
DAV Transportation Service ............................................................................................... 713-794-7198
Information Desk ................................................................................................................ 713-794-7191
Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC) … 713-791-1414
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation ..................................................................................... 713-794-7117
VA Police & Security Service .............................................................................................. 713-794-7106
VA Regional Office ........................................................................................................... 713-383-1985

OTHER LISTINGS
AIDS Foundation .................................................................................................................. 713-623-6796
Career & Recovery Resources, Inc. .................................................................................. 713-754-7000
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, Inc. .................................. 713-739-7514
Food Stamps (have your zip code) ..................................................................................... 713-767-2000
Harris County Health Department (Clinics) ................................................................... 713-439-6100
Open Door Mission ............................................................................................................ 713-921-7520
Salvation Army (for men) .................................................................................................. 713-224-2875
Salvation Army (for women and families) ......................................................................... 713-650-6530
Santa Maria (for women) .................................................................................................... 713-957-2413
Social Security .................................................................................................................... 1-800-772-1213
Star of Hope (for men) ...................................................................................................... 713-227-8900
Star of Hope (for women and families) ............................................................................. 713-222-2220
Vocational Rehabilitation Section

What you may expect from the program

1. Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program staff is dedicated to working with you to meet your identified goals. Some services this program offers are:
   - Hands-on work in a work atmosphere.
   - Close supervision with immediate feedback.
   - Ongoing formal evaluations of your work performance.
   - Clinical staff to help you identify goals and methods of meeting these goals.

2. Vocational Rehabilitation Staff is available to:
   - Discuss work opportunities in medical center and community.
   - To assist with completion of job applications.
   - Referrals to Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS), formerly Texas Rehabilitation Commission, or other appropriate agencies.
   - Referral to Texas Veterans Commission, formerly Texas Work Force Commission, for job placement assistance or other appropriate agencies.

You are expected to be an active participant in this program. This means working with clinical staff on identifying personal goals, participating during groups, and providing regular feedback to staff about your needs and how we are doing on helping you meet them. You are expected to work on meeting goals identified in your individual Vocational Rehabilitation Plan.

3. Veterans in Transitional Work Experience (TW) are not considered to be employees of the MEDVAMC but are veterans in a work-for-pay therapeutic program. Because of this you are not due benefits of employees.
4. There are some things which could occur as a result of your participation in this program:

A. If you receive SSI or SSDI benefits, these could be reduced or even lost. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORTING YOUR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND INCOME TO LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE.**

B. Regular notes on your progress will be written in the CPRS/DHCP system. These notes are available to all Mental Health staff.

C. If you fail to meet program requirements of attendance, sobriety, etc., you will be suspended or discharged.

D. If staff has a reason to suspect use of drugs and/or alcohol, you may be asked to be tested by your referral source or a physician. Refusal will be considered grounds for discharge from program.

E. Acknowledged drug/alcohol abuse to a staff member will result in staff referring you to enroll in Substance Dependence Treatment Program. Refusal will be considered grounds for discharge from program.

F. Income earned is variable and cannot be depended on as a source for car payments, rent, loans, etc.

G. If you are on probation/parole, you must inform staff of your probation/parole officer’s (PO) name and case manager’s (CM) name, if applicable, and their phone numbers. You must consent to staff calling your PO/CM if you are absent during assigned time. Failure to consent to staff calling your PO/CM will be grounds for non-acceptance into program.

5. Veterans with physical limitations must disclose these limitations at intake. Some physical conditions may prevent your enrollment but most can be accommodated. If you have a physical limitation, which cannot be accommodated, you will be referred to an alternative program, which may or may not include work.

6. Most work assignments require some standing, walking, lifting, bending, etc. Efforts will be made to accommodate veterans whenever possible. If a veteran is unable to perform work available, he/she will be referred back to their primary care team treatment coordinator or an alternative program.
~ SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ~

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide Veterans with Severe Mental Illness (SMI), Traumatic Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury and Homelessness the following:

- Individualized evidenced-based supported employment services
- Expanded mental health outreach and awareness
- Inclusion of stakeholders (family, employers, community support) in veterans’ services
- Provision of services in the Veterans communities
- Reduced stigma for Veterans with SMI in the world of work

What is Supported Employment - SE?

According to federal definition, supported employment means “competitive work in integrated work settings . . . consistent with the strengths, recourses, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals, for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred; or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability”

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998:
Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998
Pub Law 105-220, 112 Stat 936

SE – CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE

- Have a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder or Psychosis
- Be actively involved in mental health treatment at MEDVAMC
- Live within 50 miles of the MEDVAMC
SE – INFORMED CONSENT

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

- Consent: We ask that you sign an Informed Consent form indicating that you are aware of program goals and requirements. Reluctance to signing form will not prevent you from receiving services from SE.

- You may withdraw from SE services at any times, as this is a voluntary program.

- Treatment Plans: A vocational assessment plan (VAP) and strategic employment plan (SEP) is an important part of our work with you. We will talk with you at length about your past work experiences, education level, legal problems, mental health issues, likes and dislikes about jobs, your employment goals and desires and many other issues. You and SE staff and interdisciplinary team can develop a treatment plan that helps to identify goals and steps needed to find employment.

- If you would like your family to be involved in developing this plan, please let us know, and we will be happy to involve them.

- Health & Safety: If you are injured on your job, you will follow your employer’s guidelines and standards for reporting and treatment of on the job injuries, just as any other employee would do. You should also contact your Employment Specialist and inform him/her about any injuries that occurred at worksite. Your Employment Specialist will track this information and address any changes that need to be implemented to improve our services. As a VA patient, you are entitled to medical care from the VA should you require it. Please follow all of your employer’s safety guidelines when you are working and exercise good judgment to prevent injuries.

SE VETERANS MAY EXPECT FOLLOWING FROM STAFF

- You will be assigned an Employment Specialist who will help you to determine and to implement your vocational goals. Your counselor will be designated early in your assignment and will help you develop a vocational rehabilitation plan that best supports your vocational needs and desires. Your involvement is an essential part of this planning process.
• SE staff members are available for appointments during working hours.
• Your confidentiality will be strictly maintained.
• SE staff will make every effort to assist you in solving problems that may occur related to you obtaining and maintaining employment.
• Your feedback and suggestions will be collected and reviewed.

**SE COMPLETION / TERMINATION**

• Relocating outside of a 50 mile radius of MEDVAMC
• Veteran is no longer in need of SE and declines follow-up support
• Violent or threatening behavior towards staff
• Veteran cannot be located on contacted for at least a six (6) month period
• Veteran no longer wants to work
• Veteran cannot be located or contacted for at least a six (6) month period and (3) month period for veterans working in HVSEP

**CWT-SE Letter to Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**

A letter to be completed by CWT staff on behalf of participating veterans documenting participation in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) vocational program operated under auspices of 38 U.S.C. 1718 which may be entered into patient’s medical record and sent to the VBA if veteran request and signs a Release of Information (ROI) to VBA.

Veterans receiving Public Assistance benefits (such as food stamps) are responsible for informing the Department of Social Services about their participation in the CWT Supported Employment and about their earnings. Failure to do so, may result in sanctions or civil/criminal actions.

CWT SE will provide income verification to governmental entitlement agencies who present a proper ROI and who have legal authority to obtain this information.

If you have unmet prior financial obligations (such as child support, back taxes, etc.), it is your responsibility to make contact with appropriate agency and work out a payment plan. If you do not do this, money that you receive could be
garnished or frozen by creditor(s). Contact your CWT SE staff for assistance, if necessary.

A. **Voluntary reporting of income:** CWT SE program will provide income information to legitimate organizations such as landlords or financial institutions only when a veteran signs a proper and specific ROI.

B. **Guardianship:** CWT SE follows VA policies and procedures outlined in regard to Principal Guardianship and Fiduciary Responsibilities. Any veteran under Guardianship of Estate and/or Person will have to follow stipulations and laws pertaining to their particular situation whether or not their estate is under VA’s jurisdiction.

**SE Clients’ Rights and Responsibilities**

VI/CWT follows VA guidelines regarding respect of patient rights and responsibilities. Please refer to this section, which is printed earlier in this Orientation Handbook.