



Advocates for
Human Potential, Inc.

Is housing enough? - The role of employment in ending Veteran homelessness.

January 16, 2014
John Rio, MA, CRC

You would think that if a veteran...

- Had no income or lived on a limited fixed income
- Could not afford to rent his/her own place
- Wanted to have a social life
- Had little to do during the day
- Could not buy things they needed or wanted



Working would be a high
priority goal....



And yet it is often not enough



GPD Employment Outcomes*

Outcome	%
Full-Time Employment	16.0 %
Part-Time Employment	8.1 %
Retired or with Disability	34.2 %
Unemployed	27.8 %
Training, Volunteer, Student	5.5 %
Unknown	8.3 %

Perl, Libby. (2013). Veterans and Homelessness, Congressional Research Service, www.crs.gov, November 29.

The goal for Veterans leaving the
GPD program and hoping for
employment is 42%*.



Robert Drake, M.D. Ph.D.

“Given the choice between work and idleness, people will almost always choose work. Regardless of our station in life, the need to work remains one of our strongest drives.

Work is central to our lives. Common sense tells us that we feel better about ourselves when we are working regularly.”



Assumptions.....

Jobs are important to veterans.

GPD programs make work a priority.

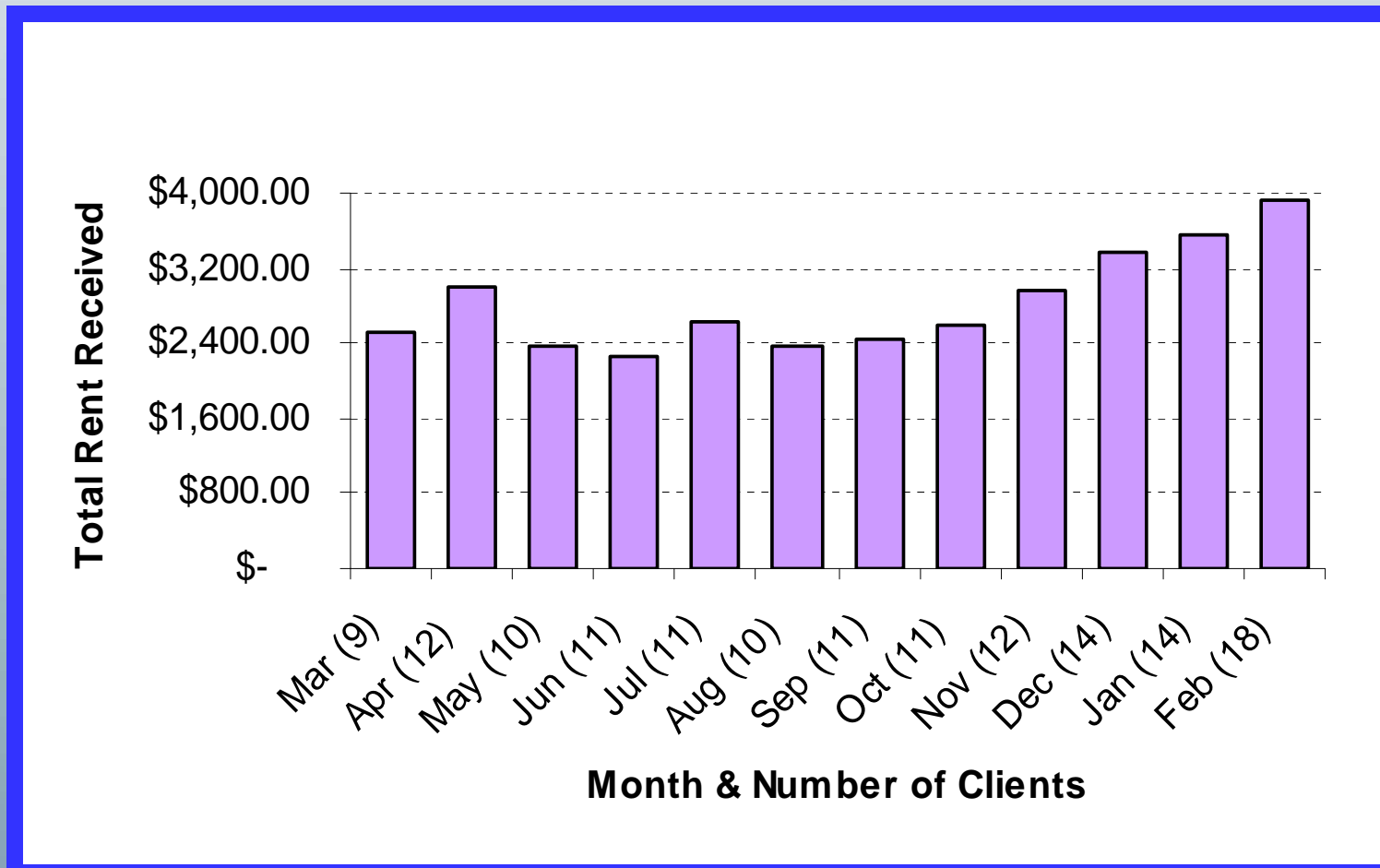


Larry Meredith
In Hooked by Lonny Shavelson 2001

“If we are going to make a difference, then we have to realize that drug abuse & mental health is related to housing is related to health care is related to joblessness is related to poverty. You can’t deal with any one of those without dealing with all of them.”



Can earned income reduce reliance on housing subsidies?



Entering Employment Rates

Project	Population	Employment Rate
Access to Community Care & Effective Services and Supports (ACCESS)	Homeless Mentally Ill	22%
Job Training for the Homeless Demo Program (JTHDP)	Broad Spectrum of Homeless	36%
Ending Chronic Homelessness (ECH)	Chronic Homeless	47%
Employment Intervention Demo Project (EIDP)	Serious Mental Illness 3% Homeless	55%
Supported Employment	Mentally Ill, Not Homeless	58%
Homeless Veterans Supported Employment Program	Homeless Veterans	42%
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)	Homeless Veterans	59%

How can GPD employment outcomes improve?

- Help residents change
- Vocationalize the housing
- Integrate housing and employment services
- Measure and report employment outcomes
- Improved collaboration between...
 - housing and employment programs, including GPD
 - HVSEP, HVRP, CWT and Americas Job Centers, including State VR programs
 - Employers and veteran serving employment programs
- Incentivize placement & retention activities
- Strengthen housing based work incentives



Going to work means change...



Am I prepared to make needed changes?



Choosing Employment...

- An individualized decision
- Consider the consequences of leaving unemployment
- Examining how ready I am to work & meet employer demands
- Determining whether employer accommodations can assist me to work
- Sometimes a forced choice because of the need for income



“Vocationalizing”

- Creating a culture that expects work.
- Arranging things, activities and resources to include and/or support employment.
- Assign accountability for employment outcomes to staff.
- Begin tracking resident employment outcomes.



Integrate housing and employment services

- Develop employment services targeting GPD residents
 - Supported Employment
 - Transitional Jobs
 - Social Purpose Business Ventures
- Partner with an employment services provider
- Conduct joint service planning/case reviews
- Share common service plans
- Address critical barriers eg. Criminal justice backgrounds
- Case managers and employment specialists co-locate and meet regularly



Measures of Employment

GOOD EXAMPLE:

- Number of GPD residents who entered employment
 - during residency; and
 - at exit.

NOT SO GOOD EXAMPLE:

- 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.



Improve Collaboration

- Identify and meet with prospective partners
- Build on common ground of ending veteran homelessness
- Define strategies to integrate services
- Establish shared goals
- Veterans can be enrolled in HVRP, HVSEP and GPD at the same time



Incentivize Job Placement & Job Retention Activities

- Recognize veterans who go to work and continue working
- Provide transportation and/or meal subsidies to working veterans
- Acknowledge veterans who remain employed for 6 and 9 months with gift card or something they value
- Hold staff & programs accountable for employment outcomes and reward achievements



Strengthen housing based work incentives

- Consider disregarding income in calculating participant fees.
- Allow for work related expenses to be disallowed in determining participant fees.
- Provide working GPD residents first choice in selecting rooms/accommodations to the extent possible.
- Develop a matching fund for working GPD residents for security deposits or other related costs to acquiring permanent housing.



Vocational Services Process

- A range of quality employment services designed to increase client employability, determine employment options, and match the right person to the right job
- In practice the process may be made up of many small steps and accomplishments as well as occasional set backs, disappointments and repeats of key steps



Vocational Services Process



GPD with a Vocational Lens

- Introduce the concept of work and career development from the beginning
- Include vocational goals within veteran service plans
- Assist veterans navigate employment services and education and training worlds
- Acquire knowledge and expertise regarding the labor market, the local job market and employer expectations



Examples

- Initiate “work talk”
- Assist with obtaining Social Security card, State ID card & needed documents
- Shopping for interview or work clothes
- Assist with enrolling in job training or school
- Obtaining food handlers card
- Contact child support enforcement to modify agreement to encourage employment
- Business appropriate email address and voicemail
- Assist with online job application
- Resume and cover letter assistance



Walking the Talk....

- Being vocationalized can mean:
 - You talk more frequently with employment staff
 - You know how many of your residents need a job during the next quarter
 - You are now better able to integrate case management and employment services
 - You now offer more employment services in your work with residents
 - You now feel more skilled and knowledgeable about vocational issues and services
 - You now have additional employment related resources and referral partners



Resources

- LePage JP, Washington EL, Lewis AA, Johnson KE, Garcia-Rea EA. Effects of structured vocational services on job- search success in ex-offender veterans with mental illness: 3-month follow-up. J Rehabil Res Dev. 2011;48(3):277-86.
- The ICA Group(2012). Employment Outcomes and Performance Benchmarks for Programs Serving Homeless Job Seekers, Boston, MA.

