

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

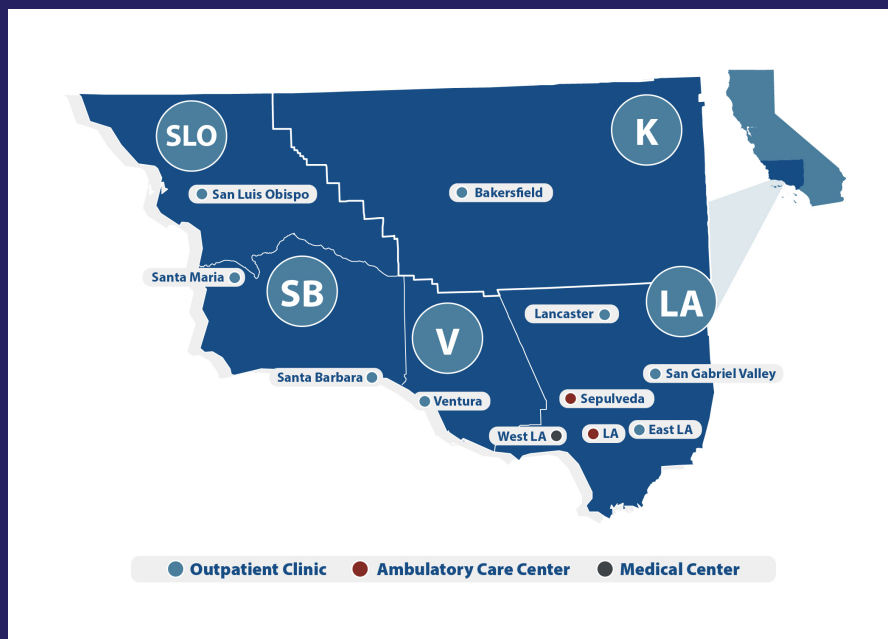
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

A person wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a red tie is holding a folded military uniform. The uniform is camouflage patterned and has "U.S. ARMY" printed on the chest. The person is standing in front of an American flag. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue diagonal shape in the bottom left corner.

VAGLAHS
Vocational
Rehabilitation

About VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation

The VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation program's mission is to maximize Veterans' opportunities for competitive employment that serve as an essential component of Veteran recovery and integration into the community. VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation provides a comprehensive range of biopsychosocial rehabilitation services to inpatients and outpatients with impairments, disabilities and handicaps resulting from psychiatric, addiction, homelessness, and medical disorders. These services and programs include core vocational rehabilitation assessment and case management services, work therapy, supported employment, and supportive programs for the seriously mentally ill and chronically homeless. As a means of attaining and demonstrating clinical excellence, VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation is accredited under Employee Development Services standards and the Community Employment Services standards within the CARF Employment and Community Services Standards Manual.



VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation serves Veterans at two ambulatory care centers, a tertiary care facility and multiple community based outpatient clinics throughout five counties: Los Angeles, Ventura, Kern, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. The VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation program is unusually large and complex in the VA system because it encompasses two major VA Central Office directives including the Homeless Program Office's Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES) and the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention's Veterans Health Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VHA VR) Compensated Work Therapy (CWT).

For vocational assistance and a brief orientation with a VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation staff member please call 310-478-3711 Ext. 48086

Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES)

Employment is a key element in helping Veterans transition permanently out of homelessness or to avoid it altogether by increasing access to permanent housing and improving housing stability. Employment provides an improved quality of life, increased self-confidence and independence, opportunities for socialization, and a decreased reliance on institutional care. As part of efforts to end homelessness among Veterans, VAGLAHS enhances employment services for Veterans through implementation of Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES).

HVCES staff are embedded in homeless programs within the VA medical centers (VAMCs), complement existing medical center-based employment services, and are a bridge to employment opportunities and resources in the local community. HVCES staff ensure a range of employment services are accessible to Veterans who have experienced homelessness. These Veterans may need individualized support to overcome barriers preventing them from returning to work such as: a poor work history; lack of transportation and appropriate clothing; history of justice involvement; and co-occurring substance use and/or mental health issues.

Eligibility: There are no eligibility requirements for Veterans to receive assistance from HVCES other than participation in a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) homeless program.



Veterans Health Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VHA VR)

The Veterans Health Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VHA VR) Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program is a recovery-oriented, vocational model in the continuum of the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) work restoration services authorized by 38 USC Section 1718. VHA VR CWT provides vocational rehabilitation services to Veterans with a wide range of psychosocial concerns. These include mental illness, substance use disorders, behavioral disorders, homelessness, and any combination thereof. Veterans are provided with on-going support services as well as referrals to appropriate agencies for information on how employment will affect their current benefits.

Through distinct programming, VHA VR CWT is dedicated to using an individualized, person-centered approach to help participants improve the quality of their lives in at least five major areas:

- Development of positive work habits and attitudes
- Gaining a sense of purpose through productive employment
- Healthy living and stability in mental health status
- Community reintegration through independent living and improved social skills
- Minimizing reliance on institutional care



VHA VR CWT consists of three sub-programs:

1

CWT/Transitional Work (TW) is a pre-employment vocational assessment program that operates in VHA medical centers and community worksites. Participants are matched to real-life work assignments for a time-limited basis. Services may relate to work in janitorial/ housekeeping, transportation, food service, engineering, carpentry, and grounds maintenance. Veterans are supervised by personnel of the sponsoring site but are not considered employees and receive no traditional employee benefits. Participants receive no less than the greater of Federal or state minimum wage, depending upon the type of work performed. The CWT/TW program offers real training to Veterans and provides an avenue to competitive jobs in Federal agencies and within the community.



2

CWT/Community Based Employment Services (CBES) assists Veterans in locating, obtaining and keeping competitive employment in the community. CBES assists Veterans in locating jobs, making connections with potential employers and encouraging employers to hire our Veterans. One of the selling points for employers regarding hiring CBES Veterans, is that CBES provides support to the Veteran at the place of employment. This can include monitoring the Veteran's progress at the worksite, offering suggestions that will help make the job transition easier, and working to address areas of concerns. The goal is to assist in finding the Veteran a job that he/she wants and likes, and in which he/she will succeed. This is an individualized process that requires the Veteran's active participation, input, time, and energy. Once a job has been secured, CBES staff will work with the Veteran and the employer to maintain that employment. Some Veterans will need only brief support from CBES, while others will require longer term support.

3

CWT/Supported Employment (SE) is an evidence-based practice which has been demonstrated to assist Veterans with the most severe psychiatric disabilities to achieve competitive employment and community integration with extensive clinical supports. CWT/SE was implemented nationally as part of VA's recovery transformation efforts, and has been highlighted as a gold standard mental health program. CWT/SE services are individualized and intensive, and are integrated as part of the Veteran's mental health treatment. When the Veteran is able to maintain employment independently, CWT/SE services are phased out and support is provided by the clinical team and natural supports in the Veteran's community. CWT/SE is routinely provided to Veterans with psychotic disorders.



Eligibility

Veterans must have barriers to obtaining and/or retaining their employment goals, which requires the intensive supports provided by the VHA VR CWT service components. Current and active enrollment in VA healthcare or VA affiliated clinical programs to address assessed barriers is required. Veterans are referred to VHA VR CWT through completion of an electronic mental health consult in CPRS by a VA clinical privileged provider. Additionally, medical clearance is required by the Veteran's PCP or NP documenting any limitations that may impact the selection of a work assignment or employment opportunity.



Consult Process

In order to submit a completed consult, please ensure the following can be accounted for:

1 **Complete a Consult**

Complete a new consult under outpatient mental health entitled "Vocational Rehabilitation Consult." Any VA provider can place his/her name under "Entered by" but a provider with medical privileges MUST be the "Responsible Person" thus his/her signature is required. Providers with medical privileges include Primary Care Physicians (PCPs), Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and select Nurse Practitioners (NPs). Each Veteran has a Mental Health Treatment Coordinator, if being followed for mental health treatment. If the Veteran does not have one, referring providers are encouraged to help arrange for the Veteran to meet with one before referring them to VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation.

2 **Medical Clearance Worksheet**

The Voc Rehab Medical Clearance Worksheet is completed by the Veteran's PCP or NP. This can be found in the "Notes" tab as a "New note" titled, "Voc Rehab Medical Clearance Worksheet." The note documents any limitations that may impact the selection of a work assignment. This must be submitted for the consult to be complete. If Veterans do not have a PCP, referring providers are encouraged to facilitate a connection to one. The Voc Rehab Medical Clearance Worksheet note must be completed prior to placement in the TW program. To expedite the process it is strongly suggested that Veterans obtain clearance prior to placing a consult. It is also strongly suggested that Veterans obtain medical clearance prior to intake in the CBES and SE programs.

3 **Vocational Assessment**

Once a completed consult is received, VAGLAHS Vocational Rehabilitation will review the medical chart, consult with a referring treatment team, and conduct an initial vocational assessment for assignment to a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist.





Contact Us

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