



Examination of Pennsylvania's Veteran Employment Program Grant

Introduction & Summary

The VETERANetwork within the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State examined the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Veteran Employment Program grant, assessing grants aimed at addressing veteran employment barriers. Grant data from eight programs that operated during Program Years (PY) 2021 and 2022 were reviewed.



Program Year	Grant Amounts	Veterans Enrolled	Completed Program	Veterans Employed	Cost Per Hire
2021	\$785,364	105 (Proposed: 135)	91	29	\$27,081
2022	\$737,671	168 (Proposed: 134)	111	66	\$11,176

Findings


\$1.5 million
funded 8 programs

273
veterans
were enrolled
into the
programs



 **202**
completed
programs
 **95**
gained
employment

The **average program completion rate of 73%** is comparable to other employment support programs.


However, the cost per hired veteran is **extremely high**.



Across the two program years, placing each veteran into employment cost an average of

\$16,031

The average **Cost Per Hire** does not account for the types of interventions provided.

Of the 8 programs, **3 programs were most successful** in finding employment for veterans:

Program	Enrolled	Employed	Hire Rate
Veterans Leadership Program	79	42	53%
Educational Data Systems, Inc. (During PY 2022)	40	17	42%
Lackawanna Workforce Development Board	53	17	32%



All 3 programs provided employment support like resume building, interview workshops, and job search assistance.



The Lackawanna Workforce Development Board also provided **occupational skills training** to those who showed interest.

Themes



Startup Delays

5 of 8 recipients faced challenges due to slower-than-expected staff hiring and veteran recruitment issues.



Recruitment Challenges

Low return on investment in terms of expenditures for recruitment and marketing and the number of people engaged.



Follow-Up Issues

No follow-up requirements made it difficult to assess the impact of the programs.



Unproven Strategies

Programs may lack evidence-informed components that are linked to employment.



Grant Extensions

All recipients received extensions.

Recommendations

1

Prioritize programs with a proven track record.



Fund organizations with a strong record of engaging veterans and using evidence-informed program components for employment outcomes.

2

Use evidence-informed employment strategies first.



Ensure programs are using evidence-informed components linked to employment before experimentation with new innovations.

3

Strengthen performance reporting requirements.



Develop robust performance measures to track impact across grantees.

4

Provide multi-year funding.



Provide longer grant periods for better planning and staff onboarding.

5

Create a community of practice or network.



Facilitate ongoing learning by sharing promising practices across recipients and the veteran-serving community.

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