

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

### **THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND EMPLOYER OUTREACH (ACVETEO) MEETING**

April 10, 2014

Washington, D.C.

## ATTENDEES

<b>CHAIRMAN: PROFESSOR MIKE HAYNIE</b>	<b>CHAIRMAN</b> Also Executive director of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF)
<b>MR. TIMOTHY GREEN</b>	Director, Office of Strategic Outreach, U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) Designated Federal Officer for ACVETEO
<b>MR. KEITH KELLY</b>	Assistant Secretary of Labor for VETS
<b>MR. RYAN GALLUCCI</b>	Deputy Director, National Legislative Service Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
<b>MR. CURT COY</b>	Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Opportunity, Department of Veterans Affairs
<b>MS. TERESA (TERRI) GERTON</b>	VETS Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy
<b>MR. ROSS COHEN</b>	Senior Director for the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Hiring Our Heroes Program
<b>MR. ERIC BROWN</b>	OPM Veteran Services
<b>MR. RICHARD JONES</b>	General tax counsel for CBS, and chief veteran officer for the company
<b>MR. ANTHONY (TONY) CAMILLI</b>	Assistant Designated Federal Official for ACVETEO
<b>MR. DAVID QUAM</b>	Deputy Director for the National Governors Association (NGA)
<b>MR. JEFF HOLLAND</b>	Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force
<b>MR. JOE PLICK</b>	Counsel for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
<b>MS. RACHEL RIKLEEN</b>	Solicitor's Office
<b>MR. ERIC PACKARD</b>	Fund Administrator for the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters
<b>MS. NANCY GLOWACKI</b>	VETS Women Veterans Program Manager
<b>MR. CHARLIE TERRELL</b>	Operations Manager for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)
<b>MR. STEVEN JENSEN</b>	Intern for Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
<b>MR. BOB SIMONEAU</b>	Deputy Executive Director for National Association

	of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)
<b>MS. GABRIELLA KUBINYI</b>	Intern for Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
<b>MR. MIKE VOLPE</b>	Office of Public Affairs at DOL
<b>MR. DAVID BODDIE</b>	Federal Allies
<b>MR. JUSTIN STEVENS</b>	Legislative Director for the Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee
<b>MR. GORDON BURKE</b>	Sr. Advisor, VETS
<b>MR. MIKE SLATER</b>	Strategic Outreach Specialist, VETS
<b>MR. JOHN STANFIELD</b>	
<b>MR. GREGORY GREEN</b>	Strategic Outreach Specialist, VETS
<b>MR. RON DRACH</b>	Senior Advisor to the Wounded Warrior Career Program for the National Organization on Disability (NOD)
<b>MR. WAYNE BOSWELL (OSD)</b>	Director of Operations and Outreach for the Transition to Veterans Program Office within the Office of the Secretary of Defense

## **ACVETEO - Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach**

U.S. Department of Labor  
April 10, 2014

### **CALL TO ORDER**

**Mr. Tim Green** introduced himself as the designated Federal Officer for the Committee. He welcomed and thanked all participants, and noted that the Committee has new members and a new chairman. He then introduced **Assistant Secretary Keith Kelly**.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

**Assistant Secretary Keith Kelly** welcomed all, commenting on the tremendous asset represented by those participating in the Committee. He noted that there had been a hiatus, due to administrative issues with appointments to the Committee, but that those issues have now been resolved. He passed on accolades to Mr. Bud Bucha as past chairman, who is still part of the Committee, although not participating in this meeting. Other members who have moved on include Professor David Gergen.

He introduced the Chairman, **Professor Mike Haynie** from Syracuse University, commending his efforts as part of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families. He also introduced **Mr. Ross Cohen**, filling in for Mr. Eric Eversole. He explained that the Secretary of Labor agreed that a vice chairman would be important for the Committee, so there is now a vice chairman also.

**Mr. Kelly** gave a snapshot of four key issues before the committee. The first was the fact that DoD is returning forces from cycle deployments at a high rate, estimating that about 250,000 troops will depart from military service each year for the next four to six years. The nation is still recovering from a deep economic recession, while Congress has curtailed the Administration's use of emergency economic measures, such as the extended unemployment compensation and other measures that have helped those adversely affected. Those working in this arena are really stretched, and these factors compound each other, making the work done by this Committee and its constituents even more important moving forward.

**Mr. Green** then introduced his staff, including **Mr. Anthony (Tony) Camilli**, who would provide a presentation on legal matters involved in being part of the Committee; **Ms.**

**Nancy Glowacki** of DOL's Women Veterans Program; **Mr. Gregory Green**, handling logistics; and **Mr. Mike Slater** who served as organizer. He then turned the floor over to **Mr. Camilli**.

**Mr. Camilli** explained that he was responsible for ensuring that all members had the information required, in particular as it pertained to statutory requirements and status of appointed Committee members as Special Government Employees (SGEs), although that does not apply to ex officio members. He advised that they would be asked to sign a Confidential Financial Disclosure, which would be explained by the attorneys during their briefing.

He reviewed roles and responsibilities, or rules of engagement for the Committee, which are based on statutory provisions of 38 USC 4110. All Committee members appointed by the Secretary of Labor, but certain NGOs are mandatory. For example, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) is mandatory, represented by member **Mr. Bob Simoneau**. Other NGO's include the Chamber of Commerce, National Governors Association, etc. He pointed out to ex officio members that their viewpoints were highly valued, but that they do not have voting rights on this Committee. The chairperson is limited by statute to a two-year term. He advised that VETS provides staff administrative support, but cannot do the substantive work that Committee members have been appointed to do.

**Mr. Camilli** reminded members that by December 31<sup>st</sup> the Committee is required to submit a report to Congress and to the Secretary of Labor. That is done simultaneously, and then by statute, the Secretary of Labor has 60 days to provide any comments. He encouraged appointees to delegate someone to come and attend the meetings on their behalf if they are unable to attend; but as clarified by the committee management official for the entire Department of Labor, although delegates can attend, they cannot vote on behalf of the appointees, nor can they be reimbursed for any per diem or travel expenses associated with their attendance. He asked for any questions about how the Committee membership works in that regard. He then introduced **Mr. Jeff Holland**, Lieutenant Colonel U.S. Air Force, representing Professor Linda Bilmes.

**Mr. Holland** discussed initiatives at the Kennedy School, working with Professor Bilmes and partnering with the community of Newton, Massachusetts, to identify ways municipalities can engage with veterans to make a cohesive community. This project started about two years ago when the mayor of Newton, who is actually an Iraq War Navy Reserve veteran, realized that as the mayor he was getting calls from his friends who needed help and did not know how to

obtain it. What they came up with was an idea of a pass-through kind of organization that connected veterans with the services they need, in the form of Newton Veterans Center. **Mr. Holland** stated that the mayor has had admirable success, which is being replicated across the country in terms of looking at ways local governments can bring these services together. They are now also working with Harvard. He explained that this is a research project directed at a very small community, as opposed to looking at different approaches to identify best practices.

**Mr. Joe Plick**, counsel for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and information law, discussed the purpose of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), which requires transparency with respect to the advice agencies are receiving from groups that they pull together. The intention is to ensure that the process is more open, and that agencies are getting balanced outside advice and expertise. The statute governs the establishment, operation, and termination of the committees. It requires that the advice be relevant to the topic at hand. It requires the committees to act promptly, and there is accountability through cost controls and some record keeping requirements. The committees have to be established by statute, or by a Presidential Directive, or some are authorized by statute, but not required. The committee must have a charter approved by the General Services Administration. Membership has to be balanced in terms of points of view or functions, depending on what the committee is set up to do. Committee meetings are public, and must have minutes, not just recorded or transcribed. The minutes of the meeting have to be certified by the chair. As far as public participation, the public is permitted by statute to attend the meetings. Members of the public can be permitted to file a written statement with the committee before or within a reasonable time after the meeting, and time permitted, interested persons may be permitted by the committee chairman to speak, but that is discretionary, not required. The public aspect of FACA is not about participation, it is about observation. Transparency requires that records, transcripts, minutes, appendices, working papers, drafts, studies, agendas, other documents made available to, or prepared for or by the Committee, shall be available for public inspection. The provision is subject to FOIA, but the agency can redact deliberative documents provided to members. Compliance with these requirements provides the Administration with advice it can act upon, without concern that someone could challenge an Agency action based on a committee decision, on the basis of a FACA violation in how the committee functioned.

Each FACA committee has a Designated Federal Official, a person from the agency that calls the meetings, approves the agenda, attends the meeting, and has the authority to adjourn the meeting when he or she determines that it is in the public interest. There is no requirement for that person to chair the committee, but they do maintain the records on costs and on membership. They maintain the records for public availability; ensure efficient operations; and forward reports of the committee which eventually go to the Library of Congress.

GSA requires an annual report of committee activities. If utilized, the agency has to approve the subcommittees, and that requires additional reporting. Subcommittees are not subject to the FACA requirements regarding openness, so long as you bring it back to the full committee for deliberation. If the subcommittee reports directly to the agency, that subcommittee would in effect become a separate FACA committee and subject to FACA. The subcommittee may also assign a person to study or draft something preparatory in nature, and that does not have to be public, but whatever is ultimately shared with the committee will become public.

**Mr. Camilli** then introduced **Ms. Rachel Rikleen** of the Solicitor's Office for a briefing on Ethics while Serving as a Special Government Employee (SGE) on a Federal Advisory Committee, including ethics requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). She provided a handout presenting a short summary of how the ethics rules impact the work of the Committee. In her role, she advises anyone who resembles a Federal employee supporting the Department of Labor. All members of the committee are free to reach out to her or to her manager, Mr. Robert Sadler, Counsel for Ethics, with any ethics questions. The primary emphasis of her discussion was to encourage all members to contact the Solicitor's Office if they have any questions or concerns whatsoever. If a member of the Committee comes to the ethics official of the Department, lays out the relevant facts, asks for advice and then follows that advice in good faith; they are protected from most of the negative outcomes that can happen from violating these rules.

The Federal ethics rules come from several different sources, including a set of regulations called the Standard of Conduct for Federal Employees, some criminal provisions which can be found in 18 USC 202-209, and also the Hatch Act, which limits the political activity of federal employees. Most committee members are SGEs, so some of the rules apply slightly differently.

**Ms. Rikleen** went on to discuss the five rules that are most likely to apply, or the five situations that are most likely to affect this Committee. The first is misuse of position. The authority and the resources that a member is given when engaging in this work must be used for official Government purposes, not for personal gain or the gain of others. If invited to a conference, the member's nametag should not reflect attendee as being a member of ACVETEO, unless the member was actually representing the Committee at that conference. Second, if the member's outside organization (nonprofit, university, etc.), does work with the Department of Labor, it is best if someone else is the point of contact with DOL. If that is not possible, e.g. for a sole practitioner, it becomes much more complicated, and her office will assist with that.

Committee members are not authorized to use Government resources for personal use. That includes equipment and facilities, as well as the time and services of Departmental ACVETEO resources. There is an exception for de minimis use of resources, such as using an available computer for a quick email, but not for using an office for an entire day. Misuse of nonpublic information, such as individual's personal information, reports that have not been made public, etc. may have criminal penalties. Financial conflicts of interest and disclosure rules also include criminal provisions. The basic rule prohibits members from participating personally and substantially in an official capacity on any particular matter in which that individual has a financial interest, if the matter would have a direct and predictable impact on that interest. The broader and more advisory the work is, the less likely it is that personal financial interests are going to cause a conflict. These are not just the member's own interests, but also those that are imputed. That includes dependent children, spouse, a business general partner, or an organization where the member serves in a fiduciary role, such as being the director, board member or trustee. However, SGEs are exempt from matters impacting the financial interest of their outside employers. There are also exemptions for things like broadly diversified mutual funds, stockholdings that are under \$15,000, and sector mutual funds under \$50,000. Remedies may include disclosure of the conflict, or electing not to participate in that particular matter.

Another set of rules is known as the "appearance of bias" rules, addressing relationships with other people. A Committee member should not participate in matters when they have a covered relationship with a party or entity involved, and a reasonable person with knowledge of all the relevant facts would question the effect on impartiality or objectivity. Another example would be calling a person as a witness who has a "covered relationship".



Non-government activities could create an impermissible conflict with work on the Committee, such as a member being paid for speaking or writing on a matter in which he or she is working in an official capacity. Fundraising for persons or entities interested in or affected by the performance or nonperformance of membership duties would be another example. Political activities are regulated by the Hatch Act, such as prohibitions against partisan activity while in a Federal building or on duty. Members cannot fundraise on days where they are doing committee work. One's title as a Committee member is also a Government resource.

Representing third parties can create an ethics concern. This is construed very narrowly, and has to be in reference to that specific party, but it can also have criminal implications. A member cannot be an expert witness in a case where the U.S. Government has an interest, if they have participated officially in the matter. So if the work of the ACVETEO ever became part of a major piece of litigation, members could not be an expert witness in that case.

The final ethics consideration mentioned dealt with from accepting gifts from prohibited sources, which is anyone regulated or impacted by the functions performed by DOL. DOL basically regulates everyone who is or has been employed or connected with a business of any kind, so in that sense, everyone is a prohibited source, but there are a lot of exceptions for the gift rule. Anything under \$20, as long as it is not cash, can be accepted from a single source at a single time, or \$50 in value from a single source over the course of the year. Anyone with whom you have a personal relationship where you might exchange gifts or do favors, is exempt, and gifts based on your outside business or employment relationships or those of your spouse do not fall under a violation of this rule.

**Mr. Camili** then asked various members of the Committee to introduce themselves, including **Mr. Curt Coy**, Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Opportunity, responsible for matters critical to veterans such as education, employment, housing, etc.; **Ms. Terri Gerton**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy for VETS, and a retired Army officer; and **Mr. Wayne Boswell**, Director of Operations and Outreach for the Transition to Veterans Program Office within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. **Mr. Mike Volpe** is with the Office of Public Affairs at DOL, whose specialty is veteran's affairs. Other members present included **Mr. Richard Jones**, general tax counsel for CBS, and chief veteran officer for the company; **Mr. David Quam**, Deputy Director for the National Governors Association (NGA); **Chairman Haynie**, who also serves as Executive Director of the Institute for Veterans and Military

Families at Syracuse University; **Mr. Cohen**, Senior Director for the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Hiring Our Heroes Program; and **Mr. Eric Brown** who was filling in for Hakeem Basheerud-Deen with OPM Veterans Services. NASWA, an NGO that represents the state workforce agencies, was represented by **Mr. Simoneau**, a Marine veteran and the Deputy Executive Director NAWSA, and **Mr. Charlie Terrell**, Operations Manager. **Mr. Ryan Gallucci**, accompanied by interns **Mr. Steve Jensen** and **Ms. Gabriella Kubinyi** represented Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW); and **Mr. Eric Packard** is Fund Administrator for the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, the organization that funds the Veterans in Piping Program. **Ms. Glowacki** is an Army veteran, and the Women Veteran Program Manager at VETS. **Mr. Ron Drach** represents the National Organization on Disability as their senior advisor to the Wounded Warriors. **Mr. David Boddie** is with Federal Allies, a six year-old trade organization started at Fort Meyer, and **Mr. Justin Stevens** is Legislative Director for the Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee.

**Ms. Gerton** gave a presentation on VETS priorities, in particular those related to policy matters. She reviewed the three P's of Prepare, Provide, and Protect. The delivery of the TAP curriculum is having a very positive effect on the Prepare aspect. As to Provide, American Job Centers (AJCs) are the linchpin of the service delivery strategy. Protection of veteran's employment rights is achieved through USERRA and Federal Veterans Protection Program. **Ms. Gerton** emphasized the need for both a veteran-facing mission and an employer-facing mission, to ensure there are jobs available, that the veterans are job ready, and that a match between veteran and employer is actually executed.

The jobs side initiatives include introducing employers to the AJC network; the idea of apprenticeships; and establishing a bridge that helps to address some of the technical training challenges with employers on the front side. AJC's are everywhere nationwide. She described recent initiatives to develop customized solutions for employers who want to become employers of veterans, or want to expand their veteran employment program. That includes collaboration with Joining Forces to work with the companies that have made public commitments. VETS has also been working directly with employers on specifics of their hiring needs, such as position descriptions (PD's) of the hardest jobs they have to fill and the hardest places to recruit. Working with individual firms, they would then work down through state directors to the AJCs, to find the veterans that are registered in the network and who prequalify for those positions.

DOL received funding in 2014 to add staff for the new Veterans Employment Development Office, to begin a sort of customer relationship management with major national employers to build these strategies out, and then to manage them through the process. Then VETS will put one individual at each of the six regions to work with the local employers, the small and medium businesses that may not have national exposure, but have regional exposure.

As to veterans, they will follow one of three basic paths: go to school and become a student; become an employee; or start their own business. TAP GPS is organized to help them obtain the resources that they need to be successful in whichever of those three paths they choose. A very successful veteran's side initiative was the Fort Bliss Veterans Job Summit. Vets worked with DoD, Chamber, and VA to bring all of the Federal resources together at a high density transition point for the Army, providing focused, on-site delivery of the tools that are available. From DOL's perspective that included local job centers, the local workforce investment boards, the state workforce agency, and state resources, creating a sort of public-private partnership. So there has been good progress with respect to transitioning service members. But ACVETEO advice is needed on reaching out to the veteran population, especially of the older demographics, who do not know or do not think about the services that are available to them at the American Job Center; as well as recommendations on how to reach employers more effectively.

There are opportunities in technical trades, but there is a need for "skills bridge" training, where veterans may be missing a particular credential, or skillset. DOL is trying to facilitate use of the educational benefits that are available to veterans; to pull in dislocated worker training programs through WIA and Wagner-Peyser; and to connect with grant-delivered training programs. DoD is looking at the pre-transition side to see what they can fit into their MOS and military life cycle training, but not all civilian technical training is militarily relevant, and VETS is working with the Office of Apprenticeship within the VA to explore ways to leverage the existing benefit structure. There is an initiative to promote registered apprenticeships, and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has their own Federal Advisory Committee on apprenticeships. The GI Bill has an apprenticeship piece to it, but those benefits go directly to the veteran, not the employer, so there still is the challenge of bridging the gap from signing up for an apprentice program, to funding the apprentice program, to getting the individual matched with a job when they come out of the apprentice program.

Another piece has to do with community colleges. NGA is working in the state survey with licensing and credentialing to develop certifications, identifying community colleges offering that curricula and getting veterans into a training program that is recognized and leads to a certification that is generally acceptable or generally accepted.

**Mr. Coy** pointed out that Warriors for Wireless had an apprenticeship program whereby after taking the training under the GI Bill, the veteran is essentially guaranteed a job. That oftentimes is the challenge – a service member and/or veteran uses their GI Bill for a certification, and then finds there are no longer any openings. If the employer makes it a condition of employment to obtain certain training as part of an apprenticeship, they already have a job.

More veterans are registering for services at the AJC. But additional support is needed with two special groups. The first is women veterans. DOL has stood up the Women Veteran Program, in an effort to partner with every female veteran advocacy group to make sure that they know about the American Job Centers, who can also connect the female veteran to the social services network as well. VETS is also working within DOL with the Women's Bureau, Wage and Hour, and all of the workforce issues that are part of the Department of Labor's menu of programs.

The next population is Native American veterans on tribal lands. It is a very small population, often in very remote locations, typically with limited economic opportunity. Congress and GAO are interested in this, and VETS is working with VA in their Native American Health Organizations, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Commerce Department. Just getting to the demographics is a challenge, because the tribes report differently from standard state populations report, and the definition of being a member of a tribe varies from tribe to tribe. Their measures for employment, unemployment, homelessness, all are different from conventional measures used by BLS. The daunting task of trying to parse out different population tables to identify Native Americans, and then differentiate Native American veterans on tribal lands versus off tribal lands, is exacerbated by the challenge of defining those terms. Thus just trying to scope the problem is a challenge in and of itself; trying to reach those veterans needing assistance is another challenge, because they do not have American Job Centers. Tribes do not get state grants through the JVSG Program.

**Mr. Simoneau** added that the issue is primarily the lack of jobs on the reservations, and because the tribes are generally fairly autonomous, it is difficult to get representation there. **Ms. Gerton** noted that there is a report due to Congress at the request of GAO regarding their strategy to address these issues, which will include building the interagency approach, and creating an internal VETS committee to have state representatives in those states with large Native American tribal lands. **Chairman Haynie** added another strategy is creating small businesses as a means to create jobs.

**Ms. Gerton** continued with a discussion on refocusing Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSGs), formula-driven grants to states that fund the disabled veterans outreach program specialists, and the local veteran employment representatives, in the state workforce centers. This will change the way services to veterans will be delivered in the AJCs that are run by states, either through contract management or state management directly. DVOPs and LVERs work side by side with WIA, Wagner-Peyser, and all of the other services. By law, all veterans are entitled to priority of service with all DOL-funded programs within the center. What is different now is the determination of which parts of the office will deliver those services, and there are reporting requirements including performance measures for the DVOPs related to their ability to deliver intensive services, so that should improve accountability.

The guidance coming out the date of the ACVETEO meeting will define very specifically six criteria that will determine which veterans have “significant barriers to employment” (SBEs) in accordance with statute. An SBE is any veteran who has experienced any one of the following: 1) a service-connected disability for which they are eligible for compensation by the Veterans Affairs Office; 2) they are homeless; 3) low income as defined by the WIA statute; 4) educationally challenged, that is, they do not have a high school diploma or GED; 5) they are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated; or 6) recently separated (within the last three years), and unemployed 27 consecutive weeks or more in the last 12 months, having exhausted their unemployment compensation, and are still unemployed. About 30% of the veterans that seek services at an AJC qualify under one of those categories, too many for the funded level of DVOP specialists. DVOPs are there to provide intensive services to the SBE population under the supposition that more intensive services are necessary to help these veterans overcome those significant barriers. So this guidance will now be clarified to say that when a veteran presents themselves and they are eligible for priority of service, the AJC through its normal intake

process, will determine whether or not that individual has a significant barrier to employment or they do not. If they do, they will be referred to the DVOP there. If they do not, they will be referred to the WIA, Wagner-Peyser side of the job center for service.

That does not mean that a veteran without significant barriers to employment might not be assessed as being in need of intensive service, but what we are after is to increase the rate of intensive services by DVOPs to 90%. So a DVOP should spend 90% of their time over the next several years getting to that level of delivering intensive services to veterans with SBE. The training institute, NVTI, out of Colorado, already has training materials developed, for DVOP and LVERs, and virtual training is available to keep all up to speed. DOL has converted a number of LVERs to DVOPs and provided additional funding to the states in 2014.

LVERs have specific employer-directed functions, including job development, training, instruction in how to write job descriptions that can be accessible to veterans, introducing them to the AJCs, and then working with the staff in the AJC to actually match veterans to employers. However, LVERs are not intended to provide individual services to veterans, or individual case management services. They are entirely focused on bringing those jobs into the job centers, connecting requirements with the veterans in those job centers, and making the match for the employer. In cases where there are not sufficient staff members in a job center to enable DVOPs to handle the entire load of SBE veterans, they will be backed up by the WIA, Wagner-Peyser counselors providing individual services, not the LVERs.

**Mr. Simoneau** pointed out that a number of states have eliminated the LVERs, going to all DVOPs. In those cases the business centers in the American Job Centers will provide the LVER function for employers who want to reach into special veteran hiring programs.

The new policy was to take effect the day of the committee meeting. In July with the beginning of the program year 13, the initial assessments will begin. Those will be designed to in the nature of technical assistance, becoming acclimated to the new measures and performance modes. They will become assessments for record in FY15, in concert with normal evaluation years, which are tied to the Government fiscal years. VETS is also working on a number of other internal process improvement efforts to improve grants and contract management, compliance programs, and delivery of the TAP Program.

**Mr. Boswell** added that DOL and VA are working with the transition GPS Program to implement and ensure that they can make the resident curriculum available not only to service

members, but also to veterans. DOL put the entire resident curriculum on the DOL VETS website, and the VA has put it on eBenefits.

**Mr. Quam** asked about the President's initiative linking education and jobs. From the governors' standpoint, a balanced initiative is exactly that this year, so they are looking at jobs for everybody. He asked how this advisory committee bridges that gap, between the more global mission and the mission with respect to veterans - his members have to do both. **Ms. Gerton** responded that VETS brings all DOL resources applicable to all employees into focus particularly on the veterans' initiative, and conversely also uses experiences with veterans' employment matters to innovate in ways that can push the broader project.

(A luncheon recess was taken.)

### **AFTERNOON SESSION**

**Chairman Haynie** opened the afternoon session by pointing out that many of the challenges discussed are going to continue, and that these are "boundary-spanning issue areas", in that if employment issues are not resolved, that will correlate with many other marginalized social, economic, and wellness outcomes for the veteran and the veteran's family as well. As a result the opportunity here is great, and the importance of doing this work well is significant.

**Chairman Haynie** described himself as process and outcome sheriff, to ensure that the structure of the Committee's work is built around being able to deliver meaningful, actionable, and relevant recommendations to the Secretary, and then ultimately to Congress. ACVETEO will be operating under a compressed time schedule to have a draft report, hopefully by October 2014. In the past the Committee solicited input from the group meeting per meeting about a wider range of topical areas. The Committee now has to move toward a deliverable, consisting of in-depth recommendations and actionable strategies.

He therefore asked the members to identify and agree on three or four very discrete key areas that are within the scope of DOL's authority and responsibility. Those key areas will be the focus of ACVETEO's work for the next six months. Having a new Secretary, this is a time to demonstrate the relevance and the importance of this committee. There was also discussion of identifying areas where making an impact is possible; optimizing use of resources; and making sure every dollar is being spent properly. Key considerations in the discussion were to be overall impact, availability of funds to implement the initiative, and the ability to measure success.

**Chairman Haynie** also suggested use of subcommittees to attach responsibility to smaller groups that could begin activities that will almost be writing the report, building recommendations starting now, and driving to have the draft report done in October. The final report is due December 31; having the draft by October will allow the Committee time to further analyze, research or vet the recommendations and prepare the report in final form.

Topics discussed as potential for the three to four target areas for the report to Congress included outreach to women and Native Americans; and initiatives to get more veterans utilizing AJC resources. Another topic was an examination of design, governance, and assessment of the entire LVER system - with so much now available online; it may be useful to reevaluate that entire program.

Small business outreach strategy was discussed, and more specifically, looking at roles and responsibilities that are tied to the smaller businesses, possibly influencing how that would be formed for the future, since the field staff has not yet been hired. Small business has particular importance because of the direct link with the veterans, and their support which makes an all-volunteer military possible. There was discussion of how veterans are perceived in the workforce, the employer stigma that exists related to particularly this generation of veterans, primarily revolving around misinformation and misperceptions related to mental health concerns, and making employer education a priority, particularly focused around reducing stigma. Targeting small business is a way to also address the military civilian divide, and the isolation veterans experience. Another aspect of getting smaller businesses engaged was the issue of tax incentives that are straightforward enough to make an impact on hiring decisions. Individual states may have tax incentives that promote hiring of veterans; or individual education benefits such as making all veterans eligible for in-state tuition. So one approach would be to catalog existing strategies, analyze where there is utility in applying any sort of uniformity to them, normalizing them, so that they become easier to access, or more effective for transitioning service members as well as for the larger veteran community.

The members discussed scalability, and how to support small businesses that want to hire one or two veterans. Another point relative to small business participation was the suggestion of looking at the TAP curriculum and/or the AJC's approach, to ensure it addresses job-seeking relative to smaller firms.



Other topics mentioned included whether USERRA is functioning properly, or if improvements are needed. The TAP program is important, as the transitioning service members have to become familiar with what it means to be employed by company X, and there is some attrition rate associated with their first private sector positions. However, TAP is a DoD program – DOL has only the three-day workshop to impact veterans, so TAP in itself would not be one of the three key areas.

Another possible focus area revolved around data collection and demographics: getting a better sense of who is and who is not employed, and whether that distinction comes at a particular education level or skills gap. The goal would be to identify those factors that are contributing significantly to differences in the employment situation between veterans and nonveterans, and linkages back to VA and GI Bill, etc. That topic is also highly relevant to women veterans employment issues. DOL does not directly engage in training, but the Committee could examine what training is beneficial in gaining employment, and approaches to facilitate credentialization, perhaps through community college partnerships.

That led to discussion of an examination of data collection, and establishment of metrics to define successful outcomes relative to veteran employment matters and the work of the Committee. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has more real time data, but relative to veteran matters and in particular focus populations, it is a very small sample. There is no way to get specific data on matters such as how various occupations or targeted groups of veterans are doing. That can be extrapolated from the American Community Survey (ACS) data at the end of the year, but there is no way to see whether progress is being made during the year. The states also collect data, and there is data available from ETA, as they compile state data. But the availability and interpretation of data is very significant, because statements are being made that there is no veteran unemployment problem. Furthermore, veterans are not a homogeneous population, and how DOL assists them is a function of those differences. Having knowledge of an a change in the profile of veterans entering the civilian workforce, as a function of the choices made relative to the drawdown, is important in order to make decisions on how to assist veterans.

There may also be certain topics that complement each other, such as workforce development and workforce training, with female veterans as a second focused area. The statute requires particular focus on disabled veterans, so that should be represented in the one of the key areas selected for subcommittee work.

Regarding the agenda item of the ACVETEO Committee 2012 report, the members agreed they would like to have feedback from the Secretary. Officially the Secretary had no comments to Congress, but members expended considerable effort in preparing their recommendations, and before embarking on this year's report, would like to know if they are taking the right approach, or if their work had any impact. Some of those recommendations made in 2012 may have been outside the purview of the Department; this year the areas and issues targeted by the Committee will be limited to recommendations actionable by DOL.

**Ms. Glowacki**, the Women Veterans Program Manager, discussed the concerns of women veterans, noting that the highest unemployment rates are without exception either nonveteran men or veteran women. The Office of Policy is also working on some additional research to look at the demographics of women. There are certain groups, such as minorities, who already have high unemployment rates, so the subpopulations, be it minority groups, disabled veterans, are all different. Many women-veteran specific events have taken place, and it is clear that the specific challenges facing women veterans are not widely known. The AJCs generally have knowledge of, and resources to address those challenges, but the AJC's role is not as widely understood. Also, women are more normalized in the veteran area, but there is still a challenge with respect to veterans being normalized within the women's community. Women veterans do have issues, but at the same time, it is not helpful to make them into victims, in a way that increases isolation. She asked that the committee to ensure that within their recommendations: a) if the Committee addresses marketing materials or outreach to employers, both genders are represented; b) for anything women-specific, make sure that veterans are represented.

The question was also asked about how many of the staff members providing direct services to vets in the AJC's are women, given that women are more likely to seek professional service if the service provider is a woman. Also there is a need to educate service providers in their screening inquires, to ask in terms of whether they have served in the military, rather than if they are veterans. There are differing definitions of what constitutes a veteran or veteran eligibility, and women may not identify themselves as veterans. **Mr. Camilli** agreed to research on behalf of the Committee as to the gender composition of the AJC umbrella staff, whether it is Wagner-Peyser or WIA staff, or a JVSG-funded slot. **Ms. Glowacki**, also mentioned being

sensitive to the other side of the issue of singling out "women veterans" – many women want to be considered veterans, without making an issue of gender.

**Mr. Gordon Burke** also elaborated on the matter of Native Americans. In 2009 Congress asked DOL to examine employment needs of Native Americans on tribal lands, Alaska villages/homelands, and Hawaii. VETS engaged a contractor to examine this matter. They found that the biggest problem is economic development, and the need for more jobs. Another finding was the need to collaborate across federal and state agencies with tribal governments, including a communications program focused on outreach to Native American veterans on tribal lands. There was also a recommendation to map inventoried employment needs of that population against programs and services available to see if there are gaps, and to create a subgroup to institutionalize and increase focus on Native American employment issues. The last recommendation was to allow for flexibility in existing employment programs to better meet the needs of this population, bringing to the attention of Congress any statutory provisions that need to be changed. Essentially the contractor's recommendations applied to government and institutions nationwide, not to the U.S. Department of Labor. VETS did begin to visit tribal communities and to talk to tribal leadership, but that was cut short by a change in the leadership of the Veterans Employment Training Service.

In 2012 Congress tasked GAO to revisit VETS to analyze progress in implementing the recommendations. However, VETS was never told to implement any specific recommendations – some of the recommendations did fall within VETS bailiwick, but VETS did not receive the final report or specific taskings. Congress just released that study recently in early FY14, stating that the Department needs a written strategy regarding these recommendations. DOL needs to begin the process of collaboration across government. VETS also received a letter from Senator Bernard Sanders, Chairman of the Veterans Committee, asking about their progress in implementing the GAO recommendations. That was also received before the final report form GAO was made available.

The first step was to learn more about the demographics of the Native American community. There are 154,000 Native American veterans, possibly 161,000 now on tribal lands or reservations, including Alaska and Hawaii, although these are not really reservations. A major concern is that one cannot generalize Native American issues or solutions. There is great disparity among tribes even within one state. Nevertheless, VETS has a timeline to deal with,

given that the appropriations language for 2014 requires a report not later than 30 June. The written strategy is being assembled, which will address the recommendations that came out in the VETS report, which included articulation of matters outside VETS purview.

There is currently a state grant program and a competitive program for the homeless; DOL also has compliance programs. However, VETS no longer has the Veterans Workforce Investment Program. VETS will establish a subcommittee to focus on Native Americans, but most of the action will have to come from collaboration with state partners. Thus if ACVETEO chooses to look at Native American veteran employment as a focus area, VETS will have resources available to the Committee, including some fact sheets and other information, as well as having an internal committee focused on the same issues. But **Mr. Haynie** pointed out that if there is no demand for labor on the reservations, then DOL cannot implement an effective strategy to make a significant change in veteran unemployment. **Mr. Burke** suggested that there might be a way to partner with states to identify jobs close to reservation areas, and assist in matching up Native American veterans to the jobs. But there is great diversity in what falls under this category, and major differences in what can or cannot be done to reach these populations. Technically there are no reservations in Oklahoma. Arizona on the other hand has reservations, and each one is a sovereign nation, so to even get access to that population, AJC representatives would have to get permission. Some AJCs are banned from the reservation, not even allowed to visit. Some reservations have their own employment programs and offices.

At this point the Committee focused on identification of the three key areas, so that they could establish subcommittees and begin working toward those targets. The question was raised about VETS mission and the scope of ACVETEO work, since VETS also takes into consideration eligible persons including survivors, surviving spouses, etc., in addition to veterans who served in the military. **Mr. Camilli** noted that the statute has some specific requirements, but then adds the phrase, "Carry out such other activities that are necessary to make the reports and recommendations referred to in this section." Thus it is up to the Committee to decide if they want the scope to include spouses or other eligibles.

**Mr. Packard** commented on the topic of focus populations, noting that he has 16 years of experience in recruiting Native American and women veterans into apprenticeship, and that there are a lot of underlying issues. **Mr. Boswell** commented that part of the task is to influence industry leaders in understanding the value of skills and attributes of veterans, their

resourcefulness in meeting mission requirements, and the value that the veteran brings as a team member.

The point was raised with respect to the topic of Outreach, to be mindful of confusion resulting from oversaturation. There have been many public service announcements (PSAs), and the VA anticipates another push. There is confusion about VETS as part of DOL, and concern over whether the message being delivered is effective. Thus if Outreach is selected as a target matter for the Committee, a subset of that might be Federal messaging, communications or campaigns. It was agreed that adding SMEs and the veterans themselves to the Federal silo aspect would be more than enough to try to take on.

**Mr. Jones** also discussed his efforts working with writers of TV programs to ensure veterans are portrayed accurately. One show dealt with both post-traumatic stress and veteran suicide. Viewers were not expecting it, and it brought home the reality. At the end of the show viewers were provided with the VA hotline information. His point was that with respect to outreach, emphasizing that this is your neighbor has a huge effect on impactfulness. On the other hand, there is a lot of distortion that leads to preconceived notions that in turn lead to certain bad behaviors.

Having considered Committee members' discussion of key topics to address in FY14, it was decided that the three target areas for the Committee's October report will be 1) Focused Populations, including female veterans, Native Americans, and veterans with disabilities; 2) Outreach, such as engaging SMEs, empowering veterans as informed consumers relative to the infrastructure of support services available to them, and consistency/coordination in federal messaging; and 3) Transition, which will be somewhat of a catchall, to include education/training, TAP, and other matters based on the subcommittee's decision on prioritization.

DOL does not have ownership over many areas impacting education and training, and the Committee needs to envision targets where something measurable can be achieved in a six-month timeframe. However, apprenticeship is one area where DOL can influence the skills gap, by helping veterans to understand that they can enroll in an apprenticeship program and get paid and collect a housing stipend and/or a stipend from the VA during the process. If DOL can partner strongly enough with VA to make that process more simplified, that would theoretically

encourage more veterans to sign up. It would be up to the subcommittee to focus their work and their recommendations on areas under DOL purview where results can realistically be expected.

There was discussion on how to appoint subcommittees, with the limited number of Committee members present. However, it was agreed that the subcommittee work had to move forward, and FACA rules require that formal Committee actions, such as appointment to subcommittee, must be taken at the meeting, where it will be made public. That precludes emailing absent members to request input on subcommittee assignment; they would of necessity have to appoint members in absentia. Members could later request re-assignment. The head of each subcommittee will be determined by the subcommittee membership.

It was agreed that the Outreach Subcommittee will include **Mr. Jones, Mr. Simoneau, Mr. Eversole, Mr. Bucha and Mr. Quam**. Transition will be **Mr. Gallucci, Mr. Hank Jackson** from SHRM, and **Mr. Darryl Roberts**. **Chairman Haynie** will be on the Focus Populations Subcommittee, having disclosed that he could have some interest in TAP, and therefore would avoid the Transition Subcommittee. Others in the Focus Populations group are **Professor Bilmes, Mr. James Nier, and Ms. Dawn Halfaker**, along with **Ms. Mary Blasinsky**, representing the National Federal of Independent Business, and **Mr. Dane Linn** from the Business Roundtable.

There was a discussion about bringing in outside expertise to coordinate on topics specific to each subcommittee. For example, for TAP, they would bring in DoD and VA. **Ms. Glowacki** will help to coordinate data and information on women's issues.

The meeting schedule for the rest of the fiscal year will be coordinated by **Mr. Camilli** using doodle.com. Target dates will be the first week of June for the next meeting, the first week of August for the following meeting, and then the final meeting for this fiscal year to be held the last week of September. He reminded members that meetings in the future do not have to be limited to one day. If the Committee meets for more than 12 hours, there is per diem available.

**Chairman Haynie** then adjourned the meeting.