

GAO and Commission Reports on Labor's VETS Programs Effectiveness and Efficiency

Most of GAO and other Commission's critiques of VETS and DoL follow a consistent pattern of falling into the following categories:

- **Process Oriented** – VETS continues to allow DVOPs and LVERs to focus on processes and not on results in finding veterans good jobs.
- **Not Gauging Results of VETS' Programs** – Over the years VETS has continually failed to gauge the results of their programs to measure effectiveness.
- **Oversight Inadequate** – VETS has allowed oversight on many states to lapse which has resulted in inadequate oversight of performance measures (if they were tracked).
- **Discrepancies from state to state in VETS' programs** – When results are collected and reviewed there is wide inconsistency of services and results state to state and VETS has not been able to create a consistent program for unemployed veterans regardless of where they live.
- **Difficulty in Collaboration** – The reports show that VETS has consistently had trouble collaborating with other agencies within DOL and especially with VA and other Departments.

GAO: “Focusing on Program Results to Improve Agency Performance”

T-HEHS-97-129, May 7, 1997

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/110/106890.pdf>

“Our work at VETS has shown that its current performance measures focus more on process than on results.” (Page 1)

Process Oriented

GAO “Services Provided by Labor Department Programs”

HEHS-98-7, Oct 17, 1997

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/230/224773.pdf>

“VETS’ performance measures for states’ DVOP and LVER staffing grants focus more on process than results..... Thus, a state that has a poor level of service to nonveterans would be held to a lower standard for service to veterans than a state with better overall performance..” (Page 3)

Process Oriented

GAO: “Strategic and Performance Plans Lack Vision and Clarity”

T-HEHS-99-177, Jul 29, 1999

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/110/108058.pdf>

“(VETS) strategic and performance plans fail to address how it will help shape the way employment services are delivered to veterans and, in particular, how it will adapt to the new employment training environment being created by technological changes and WIA.” (Page 2)

Process Oriented

Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance

January 14, 1999

“The Commission is outraged by the fact that, according to DOL's 1997 Annual Report, nine states meet DOL performance standards while placing fewer than 10 percent of veteran registrants.” (Page 5)

Discrepancies from state to state

*“The Commission strongly believes that this performance is an inadequate return on program costs of \$157 million per year.” (Page 5) **Oversight inadequate***

*“The Commission recommends that the Congress determine the feasibility of combining these programs with veterans’ programs administered by VA if these (outcome) goals are not achieved within 2 years.” (Page 5) **Oversight inadequate***

GAO: “Better Planning Needed to Address Future Needs”

T-HEHS-00-206, Sep 27, 2000

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/110/108675.pdf>

“Finally, the quality of some of VETS’ program management data is questionable and, therefore, it is unlikely VETS can accurately assess its performance nationally and know whether it is improving from year to year.” (Page 2)

Not gauging results of VETS’ programs

“In fact, VETS appears to be taking a reactive rather than a proactive approach wherein it could help shape how its programs will help veterans in the future.” (Page 2)

Oversight inadequate

GAO: “Proposed Performance Measurement System Improved, But Further Changes Needed”

GAO-01-580, May 15, 2001

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/240/231622.pdf>

“The measures currently in place focus largely on the process—that is, the number of services provided to veterans.”

(Page 2)

Process Oriented

GAO: “Further Changes Needed to Strengthen Its Performance Measurement System”

GAO-01-757T, Jun 7, 2001

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/110/108868.pdf>

“A comparison of the performance measures with the strategic plan indicates that VETS is sending a mixed message to states about what services to provide and to whom. VETS’ strategic plan suggests that states focus their efforts on providing staff-assisted services to veterans, including case management, yet none of the proposed measures specifically gauge the success of these services.”

(Page 2)

Not gauging results of VETS’ programs

GAO: “Flexibility and Accountability Needed to Improve Service to Veterans”

GAO-01-928, Sep 12, 2001

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/240/232283.pdf>

“VETS’ oversight of the DVOP and LVER grants is inadequate. The agency does not have a comprehensive system in place to manage state performance in serving veterans.” (Page 3)

Discrepancies from state to state in VETS’ programs

VETS does not communicate a consistent message to states on expected performance, nor does it have meaningful incentives to encourage states

to perform well.” (Page 3)

Discrepancies from state to state in VETS’ programs

“..VETS’ monitoring is often inconsistent because operational manuals are outdated, training of monitoring staff is limited, and interpretations of the law differ among staff.” (Page 3)

Oversight inadequate

GAO “Greater Flexibility and Accountability Needed to Better Serve Veterans”

GAO-02-192T, Oct 30, 2001

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/110/109048.pdf>

“However, we have reported that VETS still lacked measures to gauge the effectiveness of services or whether more staff-intensive services helped veterans obtain jobs.” (Page 4)

Not gauging results of VETS’ programs

“VETS lacks adequate outcome data such as information on job retention and wages. The only outcome data collected—the percentage of veterans served entering employment—are often collected inconsistently from state to state.” (Page 4)

Not gauging results of VETS’ programs

Report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs: The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program for the 21st Century Veteran

March, 2004

“Since the DVOP strategy does not mandate a standardized nationwide process, each local VR&E office had developed local policies and procedures that are unique to that location. As a result there is inconsistency across the nation in

how local VR&E staffs work with DVOP specialist. We also heard concerns during our interviews at the Regional Offices that DVOP specialists are often not skilled and trained to deal with persons who have disabilities. (Page 91)

Discrepancies from state to state in VETS' programs and Oversight Inadequate

GAO: “Preliminary Observations on Changes to Veterans' Employment Programs”

GAO-05-662T, May 12, 2005

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/120/111662.pdf>

“Assessing how well DVOP and LVER programs are serving veterans may continue to be difficult due to ongoing concerns about data reliability.” (Page 2)

Not gauging results of VETS' programs

“Labor officials acknowledge that integration of DVOP and LVER staff into the one-stop centers has been a persistent challenge.....a DVOP from another state told us that he was assigned to tasks that prevented him from serving as many veterans as he would have liked.” (Page 6)

Discrepancies from state to state in VETS' programs

“Other reasons included the perception among DVOP and LVER staff we interviewed that there is little coordination between VETS and ETA to ensure integration among all partner programs, Challenges Continue with Integrating DVOP and LVER Staff into One-Stop Centers adopt uniform definitions of eligible veterans, and consistently give veterans priority of service regardless of program. (Page 6)

Discrepancies from state to state in VETS' programs

GAO: “Labor Actions Needed to Improve Accountability and Help States Implement Reforms to Veterans' Employment Services”

GAO-06-176, Dec 30, 2005

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-06-176>

“GAO found, as well, that a lack of coordination among Labor’s agencies responsible for certain JVA provisions has weakened accountability. Also, while Labor has developed a system to monitor program performance, it lacks a strategy for using the information it gathers to make improvements and to help states.” (What GAO found Page.)

Discrepancies from state to state & not gauging results of VETS’ programs

“...Labor agencies have not provided complete guidance to grantees required to provide priority of service to veterans in the various Labor training programs, or on reporting requirements.” (Page 3)

Oversight inadequate

“..officials in some areas we visited were unaware of or confused by Labor’s guidance on this JVA requirement.” (Page 3)

Oversight inadequate

“Although not specifically required by JVA, the lack of coordinated oversight by agencies within Labor that share responsibility for implementing certain JVA provisions weakens performance accountability.” (Page 3)

Oversight inadequate

GAO: “Greater Accountability and Other Labor Actions Needed to Better Serve Veterans”

GAO-06-357T, Feb 2, 2006

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/120/112714.pdf>

“...different Labor agencies do not coordinate their oversight efforts, and Labor does not use monitoring results to improve program performance.” (Page 2)

Oversight inadequate & Not gauging results of VETS' programs

“Lack of Coordinated Oversight. While Labor agencies are jointly responsible for monitoring employment and training services, little or no effort has been made to coordinate oversight or use the monitoring results to target assistance to states and localities that are most in need.” (Page 10)

Oversight inadequate

“VETS has not been proactive in determining why certain states are falling behind and in targeting them for assistance.” (Page 10)

Discrepancies from state to state

“VETS has yet to begin addressing the significant variation in performance levels among states, as reflected by their widely divergent performance goals.” (Page 10)

Discrepancies from state to state

AO: “Labor Could Improve Information on Reemployment Services, Outcomes, and Program Impact”

May, 2007

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/270/261122.pdf>

“Also, while states collect a wide range of performance data on services and outcomes for veterans, the data reported to Labor do not currently include information on outreach to employers, a key program activity.” (Page 4)

Discrepancies from state to state

“We recommended in a prior report that Labor take steps to conduct such an evaluation, but there has been no action to date.” (Page 5)

Oversight inadequate

GAO: “Additional Planning, Monitoring, and Data Collection Efforts Would Improve Assistance”

GAO-07-1020, Sep 12, 2007

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/270/266681.pdf>

“Labor and VA have carried out some aspects of their agreement signed in October 2005 to coordinate services, but difficulties in sharing information, staffing limitations, and the lack of a comprehensive plan for guiding and measuring the progress of the agreement pose challenges to full implementation.” (Page 2, 3)

Difficulty in collaboration

“Labor and VA have had a long-standing relationship formalized by agreements acknowledging their mutual concern and responsibility for helping veterans with service-connected disabilities transition to the civilian workforce. Their past efforts to coordinate and collaborate have faced difficulties however” (page 5)

Difficulty in collaboration

GAO: “Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue”

GAO-12-342SP, Feb 28, 2012

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-342SP>

“For 15 years, GAO has reported on the need for better coordination among all disability programs (VA & DOL) to mitigate fragmentation, overlap, and potential for duplication. As GAO reported in September 1996, programs helping people with disabilities were not working together efficiently, and people with disabilities may have been receiving duplicate services or facing service gaps due to lack of coordination.” (Page 203)

Difficulty in collaboration