



REPORT

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Providing Services to Veterans Through the Public Workforce System: **Descriptive Findings from the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation:** Volume I

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ABSTRACT

As thousands of military veterans return from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and seek to enter the civilian labor market, providing effective employment and training services to veterans is becoming increasingly important. Using data collected from interviews with program staff and administrative data for the 28 local workforce investment areas randomly selected to participate in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation, we examined the characteristics of veterans who requested employment services at American Job Centers (AJCs) and the services they received. We found that, according to staff respondents, veterans were not always aware of the services to which they were entitled or their right to priority of service, when they entered an AJC for the first time, but that they were usually informed during intake. AJC staff typically knew how to implement priority of service but did not perceive much benefit to the timing of veterans' service receipt since activities could generally accommodate all interested customers. Staff, including WIA staff and veterans' representatives funded by Jobs for Veterans State Grants, reported that a key activity was translating veterans' military experience to civilian job opportunities. In addition, based on administrative data analyses in two states, we found that more than half the veterans served by the AJC system in those states received at least one service, typically a staff-assisted service, through veterans' representatives. Their receipt of training, referrals to federal contractor jobs, and referrals to jobs were positively correlated with veterans' average post-program quarterly earnings. We also found that veterans received services at higher rates than nonveterans; however, on average, they were employed at lower rates after program exit and had higher average post-program earnings than nonveterans.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As thousands of military veterans return from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and seek to enter the civilian labor market, providing effective employment and training services to veterans is becoming increasingly important. These returning veterans have developed skills and experience in the military that employers outside of the military may not fully understand. Indeed, veterans report that finding a civilian job and explaining their skills to civilian employers are two of their greatest challenges after separating from the military (Prudential Financial Inc. 2012). Many veterans also have service-related physical and mental health disabilities that create employment barriers. Through support provided by the public workforce system in American Job Centers (AJCs, formerly known as “One-Stop Career Centers”), returning and long-term veterans can receive assistance in overcoming barriers to obtaining civilian jobs and in translating their skills for these jobs.

This report describes the characteristics of the veterans who accessed services at AJCs, the services they received, and their employment outcomes after receiving those services. It describes the findings from the Veterans’ Supplemental Study, a study conducted as part of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)–funded Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation (WIA Gold Standard Evaluation) in 28 randomly selected Local Workforce Investment Areas (local areas). For this study, we collected qualitative and quantitative data on employment services provided to veterans in all 28 local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation and conducted an in-depth analysis of veterans’ characteristics, service receipt, and outcomes in two study states—Pennsylvania and Texas.

Workforce system services for veterans

Veterans receive services at AJCs primarily through DOL-funded programs. States and their local areas provide employment and training services to veterans and other job seekers through their WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. WIA also mandates that all job seekers (including veterans) and employers have access to employment and training resources provided by more than a dozen workforce system partners through AJCs. For example, Employment Services (ES), established by the 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act, provides core services, such as job search assistance and job listings. Veterans will continue to receive these Adult and Dislocated Worker program and partner services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was passed in July 2014 to supersede WIA.

The Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) within DOL administers the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program. Through the JVSG, states receive federal funds primarily based on the share of veterans in the state seeking employment relative to the share of all veterans seeking employment. States use the funds primarily for two staff positions located at AJCs:

- **Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists.** DVOP specialists provide case management and other employment assistance to eligible veterans. They focus on serving veterans with disabilities and other veterans with barriers to employment.

- **Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs).** LVERs conduct outreach to employers on behalf of veteran customers and work with DVOP specialists and other AJC staff to help veterans find employment.

These DVOP specialists and LVERs—together referred to as veterans' representatives—are nearly always veterans themselves.

Priority of service was included as a provision of the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 and was extended to covered persons—veterans and eligible spouses, widows, and widowers—in any workforce program or service directly funded, in whole or in part, by DOL. Through priority of service, covered persons should receive priority over nonveterans for employment, training, and placement services, provided that they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for service receipt.

Overview of the Veterans' Supplemental Study

The Veterans' Supplemental Study addressed two broad questions:

1. How do AJC staff members provide services to veterans and what challenges do they face in doing so?
2. What are the characteristics, services received, and employment outcomes of veterans served through AJCs?

Data to address the first question were collected primarily from visits to 28 local areas and the 19 states in which these local areas are located. These visits were conducted in 2013, before the issuance of refocusing guidance by DOL in April 2014 (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a). These visits involved: (1) reviews of states' JVSG plans, (2) interviews with state veteran coordinators (SVCs), (3) interviews with 60 veterans' representatives (both DVOP specialists and LVERs), and (4) interviews with ES and WIA staff. In eight local areas, we also conducted focus groups with veterans.

To address the question about veterans' characteristics, services received, and outcomes, we examined some administrative data on all 28 study local areas as well as more complete data in two study states: Pennsylvania and Texas. The data on all 28 local areas were from: (1) the Labor Exchange Reporting System, which contains information on customers nationwide who use ES or JVSG services and (2) the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data, which contains information on customers nationwide who receive services from the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Pennsylvania and Texas both report program data through the Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting (WISPR) system. The data from this system are particularly rich because they include information on customers' participation in WIA, ES, JVSG, and other programs.

We conducted site visits during 2013 and analyzed administrative data on veterans who exited the WIA programs from April 2011 to March 2012. Thus, data were collected following the major recession that ran from December 2007 to June 2009 (National Bureau of Economic Research 2015) but at a time of high, although declining, unemployment. The improving but still distressed economy likely affected veterans' employment opportunities, though the effects of the economy cannot be determined from this study.

Service provision

Program administration

Typically, but not always, the same state workforce agency administered JVSG, WIA, and ES. Of the 19 states in the study, the state workforce agency oversaw the administration of the WIA, ES, and JVSG programs in 16 states. In Georgia and Illinois, the state agency that administered JVSG also administered ES, but a separate agency administered WIA. Reflecting this separation of administration, WIA and JVSG staff members were not typically collocated at AJCs in Georgia and Illinois but they were typically collocated in the other 17 states. In Texas, the JVSG program was administered by the Texas Veterans' Commission, which administered other veteran-related programs. In all states, the SVC managed the JVSG program.

Typically, but not always, veterans' representatives served in their roles full time. However, 7 of the 28 study states funded part-time positions to cover rural areas or areas with small veterans' populations. In six of these seven states, the veterans' representatives also worked for other workforce programs.

In about one-quarter of the study local areas, DVOP specialists and LVERs reported blending their roles and responsibilities. In about three-quarters of the 28 study local areas, DVOP specialists mostly provided direct services to veterans and conducted outreach, and LVERs mostly worked with employers on behalf of veterans. However, in other local areas, DVOP specialists reported working with employers and LVERs reported working directly with veterans because they, or the SVC, felt that this arrangement would better serve their customers.

The management information systems (MIS) of close to two-thirds of the study states allowed staff across workforce programs to track information on veteran customers. In 12 of the 19 study states, one MIS tracked veteran and nonveteran customers across DOL-funded programs, and program staff members had access to all entered information, including case notes, for a given customer. In six states, staff had partial accessibility—either they used the same MIS for veterans and nonveterans across DOL-funded programs but did not have access to all the information, or they used multiple systems but staff members from different programs had limited access to all systems. The remaining state in the study used separate systems for different programs and did not provide staff with access to these various systems across programs.

Outreach

State and local staff reported that DVOP specialists and LVERs conducted extensive outreach to veterans. They reported using the following approaches:

- **Reaching out to unemployment insurance claimants.** Several states conducted outreach to veterans when they claimed unemployment insurance.
- **Outstationing veterans' representatives.** Veterans' representatives were often outstationed on military bases where they connected transitioning service members to the JVSG program. In many local areas, veterans' representatives were also outstationed at other organizations serving sizeable veteran populations, such as at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs regional centers.

- **Working with veterans' service organizations.** Veterans' representatives reported working closely with veterans' service organizations to increase awareness of AJC services.
- **Conducting specialized outreach to homeless and incarcerated veterans.** SVCs in eight states mentioned homeless veterans as a targeted service group and seven states identified incarcerated and formerly incarcerated veterans as target populations in their state JVSG plans.

Priority of service

New veteran customers were typically unaware of priority of service and services for veterans, but were quickly informed about them. WIA, ES, and JVSG staff across the local areas perceived that most veterans knew little about priority of service before visiting an AJC. Staff in nearly all local areas stated that eligible customers would be informed of priority of service and what it entitled them to when they declared their veteran status, typically at the front desk or during their intake assessment. Veterans who participated in the focus groups confirmed that this was taking place. In about half of the centers visited across the local areas, signage on the doors, walls, or front desks encouraged veterans, and sometimes their spouses, to identify themselves for targeted services. In nearly all local areas, front desk staff asked about veterans' status verbally or on a sign-in log and/or basic information sheet.

Staff from most local areas reported that veterans did not receive many different or faster services because of their priority. The most common way the priority affected veterans was through 24- or 48-hour holds on new job listings in the state job matching systems so that veteran customers could see and apply for new listings before other customers. AJC staff reported that they have reserved slots in popular workshops for veterans, notified veterans before others about the workshop schedule, or assigned slots to veterans first after receiving all customers' workshop requests. However, staff reported that this rarely led to veterans' attending a workshop that they would not have been able to attend in the absence of priority of service.

Linking veterans to jobs

Staff members translated veterans' military skills for civilian jobs using their own experiences and available tools. Veterans' representatives (primarily, DVOP specialists) and AJC case managers spent considerable time exploring the skills veterans acquired during their military service so that they could help translate military jargon into civilian terms. Veterans' representatives reported being familiar enough with the military that they could help veterans without relying on available translation tools. AJC staff, however, relied much more on translation tools, such as My Next Move for Veterans. All staff used O*NET to identify civilian job codes that matched their veteran customers' military job experiences.

Coordination between LVERs and business services staff of other programs sometimes occurred, but was not a common practice. Often other business services representatives at the AJCs (funded by WIA or another program) reached out to employers to identify job placements as well as the LVERs, with LVERs focusing on jobs for veterans. Staff in two-thirds of the local areas reported some coordination among the business services staff of different programs, but staff in other local areas reported that there was little sharing of employer contacts.

In-depth look at veterans served by AJCs in Pennsylvania and Texas

In both states, veterans were more likely than nonveterans to be male, be older, and have a disability. For example, in Pennsylvania 92 percent of veterans were male, compared to 56 percent of nonveterans (Table ES.1). More than 62 percent of veteran customers in Pennsylvania were age 45 or older, compared with just 37 percent of nonveteran customers. Lastly, 13 percent of Pennsylvania veteran customers had a disability, compared with 2 percent of nonveterans.

Table ES.1. Characteristics of Pennsylvania and Texas ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Demographic characteristic	Pennsylvania		Texas	
	Veterans	Nonveterans	Veterans	Nonveterans
Gender				
Male	91.6**	55.8	87.2**	51.6
Female	8.4**	44.2	12.8**	48.4
Age				
18–24	4.2**	17.0	7.2**	19.7
25–34	14.5**	24.3	21.6**	27.4
35–44	19.2**	21.4	20.9**	22.1
45–54	29.8**	22.3	24.0**	19.7
55–64	24.3**	12.4	19.9**	9.4
65 or older	8.1**	2.6	6.3**	1.8
Had a disability	13.3**	2.3	14.1**	1.4
Education level				
Below high school	2.1**	7.9	2.1**	20.4
High school diploma or GED	59.0**	53.2	39.7**	45.6
Some college	28.6**	24.4	46.4**	26.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.3**	14.5	11.9**	7.1
Sample size	17,801	186,191	94,108	891,152

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

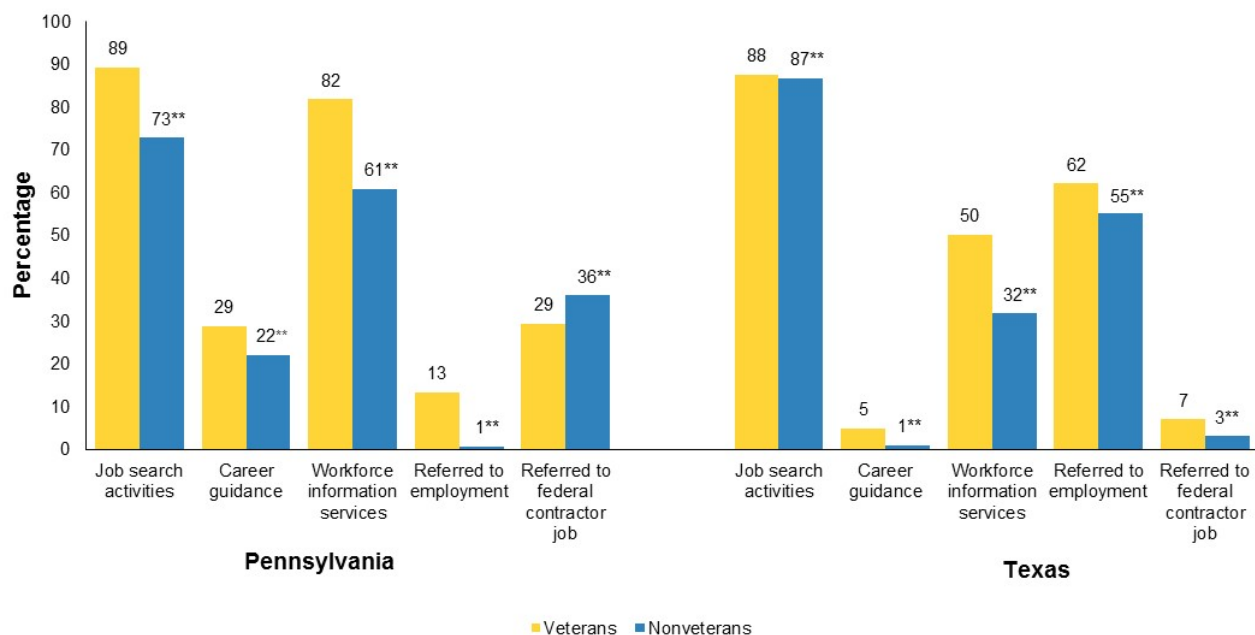
CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

In Pennsylvania and Texas, a majority of veteran AJC customers received at least one service from either a DVOP specialist or an LVER. In Pennsylvania, more than two-thirds of veteran customers received at least one service from a veterans' representative and, in Texas, nearly 60 percent did. One difference between the states was that few veterans in Pennsylvania received an intensive service from a DVOP specialist or an LVER, while 21 percent of Texas veteran AJC customers received an intensive service from a DVOP specialist and 14 percent received an intensive service from an LVER.

In both states, veteran customers of the ES and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs received many staff-assisted core services at higher rates than did nonveteran customers. However, in Pennsylvania, veterans were referred to federal contractor job listings and received other staff-assisted core services at lower rates than nonveterans (Figure ES.1).

Figure ES.1. Veterans' and nonveterans' service receipt of staff-assisted core services in Pennsylvania and Texas (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

In both states, veterans who met with a DVOP specialist or an LVER (JVSG veterans) received most services at higher rates than those veterans who did not. With the exception of WIA training in Pennsylvania, JVSG veterans were more likely to receive each type of service than non-JVSG veterans. In Texas, JVSG veterans were also more likely to receive WIA training than their non-JVSG counterparts.

In Pennsylvania and Texas, veterans' receipt of WIA training, referral to federal contractor jobs, and referral to employment were positively correlated with average post-program quarterly earnings. Veterans in Pennsylvania and Texas who received training had earnings that were, on average, \$1,696 and \$2,350 higher after they left the program, respectively, than veterans who did not receive training (Table ES.2). This suggests that these services may have led to higher earnings. In contrast, veterans' receipt of other staff-assisted core services and referral to federal jobs in Pennsylvania were negatively correlated with post-program earnings. In addition, receipt of supportive services, job search assistance, and intensive services in Texas were negatively correlated with post-program earnings of veterans. These findings—and the others that show associations between employment outcomes and service receipt—are only suggestive. Other factors that we were unable to control for may have led to a spurious correlation.

Table ES.2. Associations between earnings and service receipt among Pennsylvania and Texas veteran ES and WIA program customers (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; dollars)

Service receipt variable	Pennsylvania	Texas
Self-services	-49.78	225.44**
Staff-assisted core services		
Job search activities	161.40	-461.96**
Career guidance	-214.41*	-261.27*
Workforce information services	167.87	-178.10**
Referred to employment	340.01**	410.78**
Referred to federal job	-638.03**	-313.45
Referred to federal contractor job	1,265.76**	261.27**
Referred to federal training	-227.71	-249.67
Placed in federal training	-21.23	-550.95
Received other staff-assisted core services	-1,388.10**	70.37
Staff-assisted core service provided by DVOP specialist or LVER	-266.88*	197.41
Intensive services		
Received intensive services	88.67	-341.10**
Intensive services provided by DVOP specialist or LVER	274.98	86.13
Received WIA training	1,696.48**	2,350.08**
Other services		
Pre-vocational activities	54.37	-266.63
Received supportive services (including needs-related payments)	-337.08	-880.53**
Sample size	17,801	94,108

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. Estimates are based on linear regression models in which the dependent variable is average post-program quarterly earnings and the explanatory variables are the customer characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt. Regression accounts for clustering at the local area level. See Appendix Table F.42.A and Appendix Table G.42.A for regression coefficients of all explanatory variables included in regression, their standard errors, and additional regression information.

CY = calendar year. DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative.

**/*Statistically significant difference from zero at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

In Pennsylvania and Texas, veterans secured employment at slightly lower rates than nonveterans and earned slightly more than nonveterans, on average. For example, in Texas, veterans were less likely than nonveterans to be employed in the quarter after exit (60 and 62 percent, respectively), but the average earnings in the first quarter after exiting among all veterans (including those with and without earnings) were higher than earnings for nonveterans (\$4,666 and \$3,495, respectively). This may be related to veterans' higher rates of educational attainment.

The differences between the outcomes of JVSG and non-JVSG veterans differed by state. In Texas, post-program employment and earnings outcomes were similar between JVSG and non-JVSG veterans. In Pennsylvania, JVSG veterans had lower employment and earnings outcomes than non-JVSG veterans. For example, in Texas, 74 percent of JVSG veterans and non-JVSG veterans alike secured employment within one year after exiting. However, in

Pennsylvania, 73 percent of JVSG veterans secured employment within one year of exiting, compared to 77 percent of non-JVSG veterans.

Looking forward

In 2014, two federal policy and legislative changes could affect the delivery of services to veterans through the public workforce system. First, WIOA mandated changes to the public workforce system. Although the Act does not change the role of JVSG within local areas (for example, the VETS program is still a mandatory AJC partner), it does include JVSG as an optional partner in the Combined State Plan, which could result in greater coordination among partners.

Second, Veterans' Program Letter 03-14 and Training and Employment Guidance Letter 19-13 refocused the roles and responsibilities of JVSG staff and the relationship between their duties and those of other staff members in the public workforce system (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a). Under the new guidance, DVOP specialists are only to serve eligible veterans and spouses who have a significant barrier to employment or are part of a special population identified by the Secretary of Labor. The guidance was intended to limit the number of people served by DVOP specialists so that they can provide those most in need with intensive services. Other AJC staff members continue to serve all veterans and spouses who do not fall into one of the approved categories and, depending on the size of the DVOP specialist caseloads, may also serve veterans with significant barriers. LVERs are to perform duties related to outreach to the employer community, such as organizing job fairs, coordinating with organizations to promote job training for veterans, promoting credentialing opportunities, and informing federal contractors of the process for recruiting veterans.

As a result of this refocusing, states will have to assess the number of LVERs and DVOP specialists they need to provide outreach and facilitation services at the level needed, especially as more military men and women return home and seek civilian employment. Because DVOP specialists will be allowed to serve a smaller subset of veterans—estimated at about 30 percent of those veterans seeking AJC services (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a)—WIA, ES, and other AJC staff will likely serve more veteran customers than they have in the past. It will become especially important that they understand and apply the guidance to ensure that veterans receive the level and timeliness of service to which they are entitled. As a whole, the workforce system will have to consider how to tailor services to meet veterans' unique needs to ultimately help them achieve success in the civilian labor market.

ACRONYMS

AJC =	American Job Center
BST =	Business service team
CY =	Calendar Year
DOL =	U.S. Department of Labor
DVOP =	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
ES =	Employment Services established by the 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act
ETA =	Employment and Training Administration
GED =	General Educational Development
HVRP =	Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program
JVA =	Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002
JVSG =	Jobs for Veterans State Grants
LERS =	Labor Exchange Reporting System
LVER =	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
MIS =	Management information system
NVTI =	National Veterans' Training Institute
OEF =	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF =	Operation Iraqi Freedom
POS =	Priority of service
PY =	Program Year
SBE =	Significant barrier to employment
SVC =	State Veteran Coordinator
TAA =	Trade Adjustment Assistance Program
TAP =	Transition Assistance Program
TEGL =	Training and Employment Guidance Letter
Transition GPS =	Transition Goals, Plans, Success
UI =	Unemployment Insurance
VA =	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VETS =	Veterans' Employment and Training Service

VPL =	Veterans' Program Letter
VR&E =	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program
VSS =	Veterans' Supplemental Study of the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation
WIA =	Workforce Investment Act of 1998
WIASRD =	Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data
WIOA =	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014
WISPR =	Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting
WOTC =	Work Opportunity Tax Credit
WPRS =	Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services

I. INTRODUCTION

As thousands of military veterans return from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and seek to enter the civilian labor market, providing effective employment and training services to veterans is becoming increasingly important. These returning veterans have developed skills and experience in the military that employers outside of the military may not fully understand. Indeed, veterans report that finding a civilian job and explaining their skills to civilian employers are two of their greatest challenges after separating from the military (Prudential Financial, Inc. 2012). Many veterans also have service-related physical and mental health disabilities that create employment barriers. Through services provided by the public workforce system in American Job Centers (AJCs, formerly known as “One-Stop Career Centers”), returning and long-term veterans can receive assistance in overcoming barriers to obtaining civilian jobs and in translating their skills for these jobs.

In AJCs, veterans receive services through programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), primarily through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), Employment Services (ES) established by the 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG). Congress allocates about \$2 billion annually for employment and training services that states and their local workforce investment areas (local areas) provide through their WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. WIA also mandates that job seekers, including veterans, and employers have access to employment and training resources provided by more than a dozen workforce system partners through AJCs. ES provides core services, such as job search assistance and job listings, to all job seekers. The JVSG is a formula grant program that funds staff at AJCs to work directly with customers who are veterans and to work in support of veterans through engagement with employers and other organizations. Veterans will continue to receive these partner services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which was passed in July 2014 to supersede WIA.

This report describes the characteristics of the veterans who accessed services at AJCs, the services they received, and their employment outcomes. It describes the findings from the Veterans’ Supplemental Study (VSS), a study conducted as part of the DOL-funded WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation (WIA Gold Standard Evaluation) in 28 randomly-selected local areas. Because the workforce investment system provides priority of service (POS) to veterans, and local areas did not wish to restrict the services offered to veterans, veterans were not included in the random assignment evaluation. However, the evaluation team interviewed staff working with veterans in all 28 local areas about the services they offered veterans. Moreover, the team analyzed administrative data on the veterans served in the study’s local areas.

A. Workforce system’s services for veterans

The Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) within DOL coordinates the department’s veteran services. Working in partnership with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), which oversees WIA, VETS ensures the implementation of veterans’ POS for DOL-funded employment and training programs and oversees the provision of services to AJCs’ veteran customers through the JVSG. VETS also manages the Transition Assistance

Program's (TAP) DOL Employment Workshop and other programs such as those serving homeless veterans.

Priority of service. POS was included as a provision of the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (JVA) and was extended to covered persons (that is, veterans and eligible spouses) in any workforce program or services directly funded, in whole or part, by DOL.¹ POS, as defined in JVA, meant that covered persons should be given priority over nonveterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services, provided the person otherwise meets the eligibility requirements for participation in the program. State- and local-level service providers were required not only to provide POS and inform each POS-eligible person of the rights and benefits to which they were entitled, but also to provide information on benefits and services available from other providers. Initially, guidance provided to the workforce investment system, including staff of the local areas and AJCs, on POS implementation was limited. In November 2009, however, ETA and VETS issued concurrent guidelines—a Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) and a Veterans Program Letter (VPL), respectively—that provided specific information on how to apply POS and determine who is eligible to receive it (U.S. Department of Labor 2009).

A 2013 report by Mathematica (Boraas et al. 2013) analyzed how staff of a select set of AJCs implemented POS following the 2009 guidance. The report produced three key findings. First, staff of the AJCs often considered the federal guidance difficult to understand and preferred to rely on state or local guidance. Second, the report found considerable variation across local areas in how they identified veterans and the information they collected from them. Finally, the way POS was implemented with customers was relatively consistent across the local areas participating in the study.

Jobs for Veterans State Grants. Through the JVSG, each state receives federal funds that are primarily based on its share of veterans seeking employment relative to all veterans seeking employment. In turn, the state uses the grant funds to hire veterans' representatives, who are almost always veterans themselves, and places them across the state to provide outreach and support to veterans. Typically, the state locates veterans' representatives where there is the most perceived need. Veterans' representatives placed in AJCs work with other AJC partner programs—for example, WIA, ES, and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA), which supports workers dislocated because of trade-related lay-offs—on behalf of veteran customers.

Two types of veterans' representative positions are funded through the grants:

1. **Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists.** These staff provide intensive services and facilitate placements for eligible veterans; their priority is to serve disabled veterans and other veterans with barriers to employment.

¹ The POS definition of "veteran" is a person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. An eligible spouse is the spouse of (1) a veteran who died of service-connected disability; (2) a member of the Armed Forces who, while on active duty, was listed as missing, captured, or forcibly detained for at least 90 days; (3) a veteran who has a total service-connected disability; or (4) a veteran who died while such a disability existed (Jobs for Veterans Act [JVA], PL 107-228).

2. **Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs).** These staff conduct outreach to employers on behalf of veterans, educate AJC staff on services to veterans, and work with DVOP specialists and other staff to help veterans secure employment.

DOL has provided guidance to states on the roles and responsibilities of these staff. In April 2014, after data were collected for this report, VETS and ETA jointly issued guidance (TEGL 19-13 and VPL 03-14) to clarify and refocus the responsibilities of veterans' representatives to ensure that the employment needs of veterans are being met (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a). Under these guidelines, DVOP specialists provide employment services only to those veterans and eligible spouses who attest to having at least one of the six significant barriers to employment (SBEs) as defined by the guidance. Veterans with SBEs are those who: (1) are recently separated service members and have been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks in the previous 12 months, (2) have a service-connected disability, (3) are homeless, (4) are ex-offenders who have been released from incarceration in the last 12 months, (5) are lacking a high school diploma, and/or (6) are low income. An addendum (TEGL 20-13 and VPL 04-14) added veterans who are 18 to 24 years old to the list of those eligible to receive DVOP services, whether or not they have one of the SBEs identified above (U.S. Department of Labor 2014b). Additionally, VPL 08-14 authorized DVOP specialists to serve (1) transitioning members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of intensive services; (2) members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units; and (3) the spouses or other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members (U.S. Department of Labor 2014c). If a DVOP specialist does not have a full caseload, he or she should review case files and follow up with veteran customers as well as conduct outreach to other organizations to identify and enroll veterans with one or more SBEs. The LVERs work with employers and business groups to promote the employment of veterans, often working with other AJC business services staff.

Transition Assistance Program. Under a program jointly funded by the U.S. Departments of Defense, Veteran Affairs, and Labor, separating military personnel also received information on transitioning to civilian employment through TAP. In 2013, TAP was replaced by Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success). Previously, veterans' representatives conducted one component of TAP: they provided workshops for separating military personnel on employment services available through the AJCs. Under Transition GPS, private contractors present these workshops. Transition GPS was being implemented at the time data were being collected for this study.

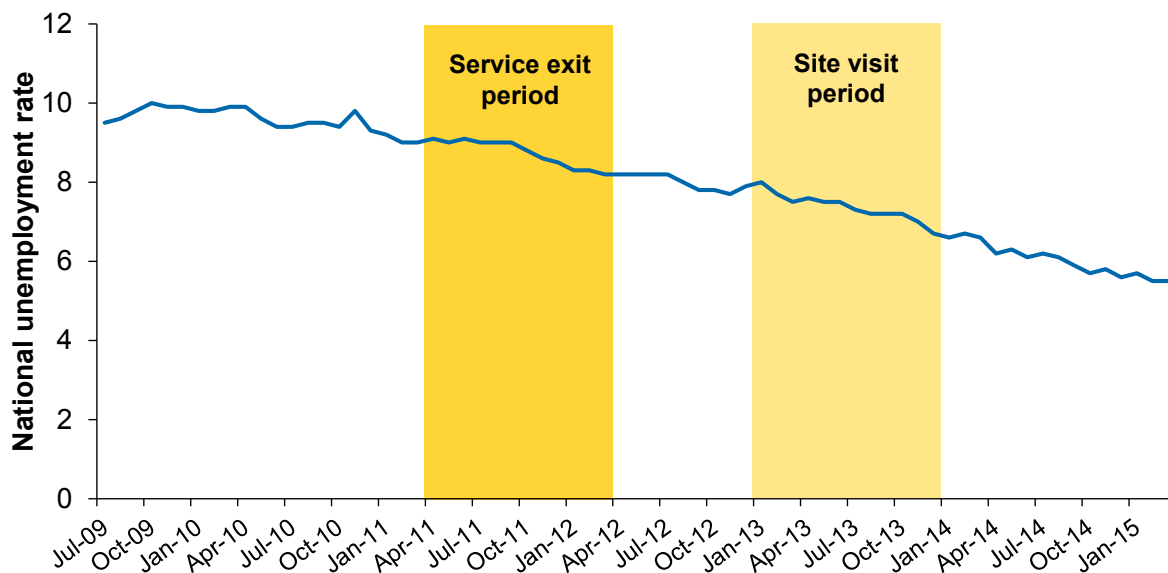
Other veteran-specific programs. DVOP specialists and AJC staff also work with veterans served through other grants and initiatives. For example, through the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), VETS awards grants to local workforce agencies, non-profits, or other approved entities to help homeless veterans overcome barriers and achieve gainful employment. Grantees are encouraged to work with their local AJCs. VETS also supports community-based Stand Down events through the HVRP program. These are locally coordinated events at which homeless veterans can access social services, including, but not limited to, health care, mental health, substance abuse, and employment services. VETS awards these noncompetitive grants to state and local workforce investment boards, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations for specific events and encourages partnership with DVOP specialists.

B. Veterans' Supplemental Study

The VSS provides a unique opportunity to understand how a randomly selected set of local areas provided services to veterans through their AJCs. Although the VSS cannot provide estimates of the impacts of these services on veteran outcomes, as the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation will do for nonveteran adult and dislocated worker customers, it analyzes the characteristics and outcomes of veterans who received services through AJCs and describes how those services were provided. In addition, using a reporting system being piloted by two study states, the VSS reports findings from an analysis of veterans receiving services through the WIA and ES programs.

Data for this study were collected following the major recession that occurred from December 2007 to June 2009 (National Bureau of Economic Research 2015). Site visits that informed the study's qualitative component were conducted during 2013 and the administrative data analyzed included veterans who exited the WIA programs' services from April 2011 to March 2012 (Figure I.1). While still high, the unemployment rate during this period decreased from 9.1 percent in April 2011, to 8.2 percent in March 2012, and to 7.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012 (U.S. Department of Labor 2015). Moreover, the percentage of the unemployed who had been unemployed for 27 weeks or longer peaked in the summer of 2011 (Kosanovich and Theodossiou 2015). The improving but still distressed economy likely affected veterans' employment opportunities, though the effects of the economy cannot be determined from this study.

Figure I.1. National unemployment rate during the study period



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey. Available at http://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet?request_action=wh&graph_name=LN_cpsbref3. The unemployment rate is seasonally adjusted.1.

1. Qualitative component

The study's qualitative component sought to address:

- **How do AJCs provide services to veterans?** How do veterans learn about the assistance the AJCs offer? What are the procedures for orienting and enrolling veterans into WIA and/or ES, and how do they differ from procedures for nonveteran customers? How do AJC staff members operationalize the veterans' POS for the WIA and ES programs? What services and training are provided to veterans through the AJCs?
- **How do staff coordinate services?** How do the DVOP specialists and LVERs coordinate to provide assistance to veterans, and how do these staff members interact with other AJC staff?
- **What challenges have AJC staff faced, and what best practices have they implemented in serving veterans?** What issues do staff face in providing services and training to veterans, and how do they differ from the issues they face in serving nonveteran customers? What innovative or promising practices have states or local areas implemented to provide employment services and training to veterans?

Data sources. The VSS qualitative data collection was conducted in conjunction with the second round of implementation study visits for the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation, which occurred in 2013. For both studies, visits were conducted to all 28 local areas participating in the evaluation (Table I.1).² To understand the state context, project staff reviewed states' JVSG plans and interviewed the state veteran coordinator (SVC) in 18 of 19 states represented in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation.³

In each of the 28 local areas, we visited at least one AJC for the VSS. The selected AJC had to have at least one veterans' representative on staff. Across the 28 participating local areas, the site visitors worked with the state or local area to identify at least one veterans' representative in the identified AJC for an interview. Evaluation staff interviewed 60 veterans' representatives across the 28 local areas. In addition, during all WIA and ES staff interviews conducted as part of the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation visit, evaluation staff asked about their role in, and perceptions of, providing services to local area veterans. Evaluation staff interviewed respondents using standard semistructured protocols that enabled site visitors to collect consistent information across local areas but also elicited respondents' open-ended responses to questions.

Site visitors conducted additional activities in 8 study local areas, which were selected because of the size of their veteran populations and available information on additional veteran services they provide. In these areas, they interviewed additional veterans' representative staff, met with purposively selected veterans to discuss their experiences in the AJC system, and reviewed the case files of several veteran customers to illustrate how they receive services through the AJC system. For both these activities—the focus groups and the case file reviews—we requested that the local area staff identify veterans who represented a range of backgrounds and experiences. We requested that veterans represented in the focus groups and the case file

² For information on the selection of local areas for the evaluation, see Mastri et al. (forthcoming).

³ The SVC in the 19th state was not available for an interview at the time of data collection.

reviews be a mix of male and female veterans, pre- and post-9/11 veterans, and veterans with and without a service-connected disability.

Table I.1. Local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation

State	LWIB name	Local area short name for report
GA	Atlanta Regional Workforce Board	Atlanta Region (Georgia)
NY	Capital Regional Workforce Investment Board	Capital Region (New York)
MO	Central Region Workforce Investment Board	Central Region (Missouri)
NY	Chautauqua County Workforce Investment Board	Chautauqua County (New York)
IL	Chicago Workforce Investment Council ^a	Chicago (Illinois)
TN	East Tennessee Human Resource Agency	East Tennessee
IN	EmployIndy Workforce Investment Board	Indianapolis (Indiana)
NJ	Essex County Workforce Investment Board	Essex County (New Jersey)
FL	First Coast Workforce Investment Board	First Coast (Florida)
CA	Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board	Fresno County (California)
KY	The Greater Louisville Workforce Investment Board	Louisville (Kentucky)
TX	Gulf Coast Workforce Board	Gulf Coast (Texas)
SC	Lower Savannah Workforce Investment Area	Lower Savannah (South Carolina)
MI	Muskegon/Oceana Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board	Muskegon (Michigan)
LA	The New Orleans Workforce Investment Board	New Orleans (Louisiana)
NY	New York City Workforce Investment Board	New York City
TX	North Central Texas Workforce Development Board-Workforce Solutions	North Central Texas
PA	Northwest Workforce Investment Board	Northwest Pennsylvania
CA	Sacramento Works Workforce Investment Board	Sacramento (California)
SC	Santee-Lynches Workforce Investment Board	Santee-Lynches (South Carolina)
SD	South Dakota Workforce Development Council	South Dakota
TX	South Plains Workforce Development Board	South Plains (Texas)
MI	Southeast Michigan Community Alliance Workforce Investment Board	Southeast Michigan
PA	Southwest Corner Workforce Investment Board	Southwest Corner Pennsylvania
MS	Twin Districts Workforce Area	Twin Districts (Mississippi)
PA	Workforce Investment Board of Central Pennsylvania	Central Pennsylvania
WI	The Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development Board	Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Counties (Wisconsin)
WA	The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County	Seattle-King County (Washington)

^aIn July 2012, during the course of the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation, the Chicago Workforce Investment Council merged with the Workforce Board of Northern Cook County and Cook County Workforce Investment Board to form a single workforce investment area, the Chicago Cook Workforce Investment Board (staffed by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership). Only those AJCs, affiliate, and satellite centers located within the boundaries of the City of Chicago participated in the study, both before and after the merger.

LWIB = Local Workforce Investment Board; WIA = Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

2. Quantitative component

The VSS quantitative component used available administrative data to address the following research questions:

- **What are the characteristics of veterans receiving assistance through the AJC system?**
How do their characteristics compare to those of nonveterans receiving assistance?
- **What assistance is provided to veterans through the AJCs?**
- **What are the outcomes of participating veterans?**
- **What associations, if any, do the data suggest between the characteristics of veterans and the assistance they receive?**
- **What associations, if any, do the data suggest between the assistance veterans receive and their outcomes?**

Data sources. For the quantitative component, we used data on veterans and other ES and WIA customers from three sources (Table I.1):

1. **Labor Exchange Reporting System (LERS)**, a national data set, contains information on customers using labor exchange services from the ES or JVSG programs. States report these data in the ETA 9002 Report, which includes information on ES services, and the VETS 200 Report, which includes information on veteran services.^{4,5} Because two states in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation (Georgia and Michigan) did not report the local areas in which customers were served, our LERS analysis includes 25 of the study's 28 local areas.
2. **Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD)**, a national data set, contains information on customers receiving services from the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. All local areas are included in the WIASRD analysis.
3. **Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting (WISPR)** system, which links individuals across WIA, ES, JVSG, TAA, and other programs. Two states in the study—Pennsylvania and Texas—reported data through this system.

To facilitate the quantitative analyses, we limited the files to those customers who exited from the WIA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs or the ES program at a particular point in time: between April 1, 2011, and March 31, 2012.⁶ This timeframe enabled us to calculate outcome measures based on four quarters of post-program WIA data in the WIASRD and

⁴ Services funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act are reported in the ETA 9002 Report, and services funded by the JVA are reported in the VETS 200 Report. However, we refer herein to all data reported for these programs collectively as ES data, because both are contained in the LERS.

⁵ Databases containing ES participant-level records were started in program year 2012. Appendix A notes several issues with the quality of the LERS data.

⁶ For simplicity, throughout the report, we refer to the time period between April 1, 2011, and March 31, 2012, as "2011–2012."

WISPR and three quarters of post-program ES data in the LERS (see Table I.2). To exclude any outlier cases, we excluded exiters enrolled for more than six years.

The report’s appendices provide additional information about the quantitative component’s data sources, methods, and results. Appendices A and C contain more details on the decisions made and methodology used for the descriptive quantitative data analyses included in Chapters III, IV, and V, and Appendix B provides variable definitions. The remaining appendices provide tables of the LERS data (Appendix D), WIASRD data (Appendix E), and WISPR data for Pennsylvania and Texas (Appendices F and G, respectively).

Table I.2. Characteristics of administrative data sets and samples used in the VSS

Characteristic	LERS	WIASRD	WISPR
Study local areas represented	25 ^a	28	6
Data set sample	10% of nonveterans in data set; all veterans	All records	All records
Data set reporting quarter	PY2012Q4	PY2012Q4	PY2012Q4
Exiting cohorts	April 2011—March 2012	April 2011—March 2012	April 2011—March 2012
Quarters of post-exit data	3 quarters after exit quarter on a rolling basis	4 quarters after exit quarter on a rolling basis	4 quarters after exit quarter on a rolling basis

LERS = Labor Exchange Reporting System; PY = program year; Q = quarter; WIASRD = Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data; WISPR = Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting system.

^aWe were able to conduct our analysis across only 25 local areas using the ES data, because 3 local areas were in two states (Georgia and Michigan) that did not report the local areas in which customers were served.

3. Analysis

For this report, we analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data described above and, when possible, integrated findings from both data sources. For the qualitative data, the authors triangulated the data collected from multiple respondents and respondent types within each local area to compare and contrast their responses. Any general agreements are presented in the text as representing perceptions of staff. However, when there was disagreement or it was important to note the types of staff whose responses are presented, we distinguish the staff type (for example, WIA staff, WIA managers, and veterans’ representatives). Whether there were agreements or disagreements among respondents, the analyses are based on interviews of only a subset of staff, including local-area WIA and veterans’ representatives who typically work at only one or two of a local area’s AJCs; therefore, findings should be interpreted with caution.

For reporting purposes, we present most of our analyses using the local area as the unit of analysis. Although these analyses present the view of veterans’ services of those interviewed, we acknowledge that the findings do not necessarily represent the viewpoints of all staff in all AJCs across the local areas. Instead, our qualitative findings provide an overview of how the workforce system is providing services to the nation’s veterans.

Analysis of administrative data for the study local areas is primarily descriptive. Across the local areas (25 in the LERS data set), the administrative data analysis describes veterans’ characteristics, the services they received, and the outcomes they achieved.

However, we also conducted a correlational analysis using the Pennsylvania and Texas WISPR data. We analyzed the data from these two states because they reported data through the consolidated WISPR system; they were not representative of all states. Because these data sets combine veterans' receipt of services from both the ES and WIA programs, we analyzed outcomes as a result of participating in both programs. In addition to providing descriptive analysis of veterans' characteristics, services received, and outcomes for these states, we present analyses that sought to identify any associations between customer characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt and outcomes experienced by different subgroups of veterans.

C. Report roadmap

The rest of this report describes the characteristics, services, and outcomes of veterans in the 28 randomly selected local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation. Chapter II provides context for veteran services by describing JVSG administration in the 19 states with at least one local area participating in the study. In Chapter III, we combine administrative and qualitative data to present the experiences of the 28 local areas in providing services to veterans. Given the richer analysis allowed by the WISPR data, Chapters IV and V provide state-specific analysis of the qualitative and administrative data for Pennsylvania and Texas, respectively. Chapter VI concludes by summarizing the key challenges local areas faced in serving veterans and the promising practices that emerged and by looking to the future in light of the guidance issued and passage of WIOA in 2014.

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II. STATE ADMINISTRATION OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

Local areas' provision of veteran services through the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) is shaped by Federal policy and guidance, which in turn are influenced by different state contexts. States can implement different systems of oversight and different policies that affect the staff who are hired to provide the services. Thus, before examining how veterans receive services, it is important to understand the state structure and administration of veteran services.

This chapter examines administration of the JVSG in the study states. It describes the state agencies administering the JVSG and their role in developing and disseminating policy related to providing JVSG services. Next, it discusses the states' role in hiring and allocating veterans' representatives—the DVOP specialists providing intensive services to veterans and the LVERs facilitating outreach to employers on behalf of veterans—and describes the roles and training of staff in AJCs who serve veterans. Finally, it summarizes the management information systems that the JVSG and other programs use to manage the provision of services.

A. State administration for veteran services

The JVSG program typically was administered by state workforce agencies. In 16 of the 19 states in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation, the state workforce agency oversaw its state's WIA and ES programs, in addition to the JVSG program. In these states, the WIA, ES, and JVSG programs were typically collocated at AJCs. However, two states—Georgia and Illinois—divided responsibility for these programs across agencies, and one state—Texas—administered its JVSG through an agency responsible for veteran-related programs in the state, rather than through the workforce agency. These organizational differences at the state level affected how local-level staff members work across these programs to provide veterans with comprehensive workforce and employment services.

In Georgia and Illinois, at the time of data collection in 2013, the agency responsible for the WIA program did not administer the JVSG program, and this affected the collocation of WIA and JVSG staff. The Georgia Governor's Office of Workforce Development administered the state's WIA program, and the Georgia Department of Labor oversaw the ES and JVSG programs. Veterans' representatives worked from Georgia Department of Labor employment centers, but WIA staff members operated at AJCs, which housed the WIA program. The Illinois structure was similar: the Department of Employment Services managed the JVSG, ES, and unemployment insurance (UI) programs, but the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity administered the WIA program. In the Illinois study local area, as in Georgia, the WIA and veterans' representatives typically worked from different facilities.

In 2005, Texas legislation consolidated all veterans programs into one agency: the Texas Veterans' Commission. Although Texas' JVSG program was managed outside of the state's workforce system, the Commission contracted directly with the state's local workforce investment boards for space within AJCs. Therefore, veterans' representatives could provide employment services to veterans through the state's AJC network. Chapter V further describes Texas' JVSG program and services provided to veterans.

In all states, the state veteran coordinator (SVC), who was housed in the JVSG administrative agency, managed the program. In addition, the SVC developed and disseminated policy (discussed in Section B of this chapter) and oversaw DVOP specialist and LVER training. Depending on the state, the SVC also had a role in hiring and supervising the veterans' representatives (discussed in Section C of this chapter).

B. State policy and dissemination

SVCs from all the states in the study disseminated state and federal policies and guidance to all staff members responsible for serving veteran customers. Federal guidance typically addressed such topics as the roles and responsibilities of DVOP specialists and LVERs, as well as the provision of POS. These policies, delivered in VPLs and TEGs, often provided the basis for state-level JVSG policy and guidance. State respondents frequently noted that state guidance reiterates the statutory roles of DVOP specialists and LVERs. In about three-fourths of the states, however, respondents said that state policies were intended to clarify language in federal guidance and to describe how federal policies should be implemented, given the state's policy context.

States also developed their own veteran-related policies, which they described in their state plans. In some cases, state plans specified target service populations and addressed how local areas should provide services to specific veteran populations. Box II.1 provides examples of states' customization and additions to federal guidance.

Box II.1. Examples of states' additions to, and customizations of, federal guidance

- Louisiana's state POS policy details how POS should be implemented at the local level. For example, this policy specifies that signs describing POS must be posted at AJCs, and simple referrals of veterans to DVOP specialists or LVERs are not sufficient to satisfy POS requirements. The state's policy also requires that DVOP specialists conduct POS training for a set number of AJCs once a year.
- Texas developed a state-specific policy and procedures manual for DVOP specialists and LVERs that specifies performance standards, expectations for each type of staff member, and what kinds of services to provide veterans and how to provide them. This allowed for standardization across the entire state in an effort to ensure implementation of best practices and that outcome and performance measures were meaningful.
- New York's policy for serving veterans is specified in its Jobs for Veterans Initiative (JVI). This policy, implemented in March 2013, standardizes services provided by veterans' representatives across the state so that all veteran customers can access the same menu of services regardless of the center providing them. A key component of this policy is a requirement that new veteran customers attend three service appointments with AJC staff. For customers receiving UI or unemployment compensation for ex-servicemembers (UCX) benefits, any failure to report to a service appointment results in suspension of those benefits.
- In 2011, Washington's state legislature codified POS in state law to protect employers that give priority to veterans from Equal Employment Opportunity complaints.

Source: Selected states' JVSG plans, 2010-2014.

All SVCs reported providing additional support for local-level staff when new policy or guidance was issued. Approaches for delivering this support included in-person trainings or webinars for the veterans' representatives, who then provided training to and support for nonveteran AJC staff. This approach also gave veterans' representatives the opportunity to provide follow-up training or reminders about other aspects of serving veterans.

C. Hiring and allocating veterans' representatives

DOL allocates the JVSG funds to states, but states are responsible for determining the number of LVERs and DVOP specialists to fund and where to locate them across the state. Using data from VPL 02-11 and states' 2010–2014 JVSG plans, Table II.1 provides the JVSG funding allocation and the number of funded LVER and DVOP specialist positions in each of the 19 states in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation.

Table II.1. Veteran population, JVSG allocation, and number of LVERs and DVOP specialists, by state

State	Veteran population	JVSG allocation	LVERs (FTE)	DVOP specialists (FTE)
California	1,788,000	\$18,715,000	88	164
Florida	1,570,000	\$11,202,000	80	94
Georgia	725,000	\$5,857,000	34.5	54
Illinois	740,000	\$6,652,000	20	31
Indiana	485,000	\$3,585,000	37.5	29
Kentucky	332,000	\$2,441,000	14	14
Louisiana	316,000	\$2,049,000	14	14
Michigan	642,000	\$5,738,000	32	27
Mississippi	193,000	\$1,510,000	9	12
Missouri	472,000	\$3,317,000	40.5	15.5
New Jersey	395,000	\$3,723,000	10.5	31.5
New York	922,000	\$7,841,000	37	43
Pennsylvania	909,000	\$6,243,000	31	39.5
South Carolina	351,000	\$2,702,000	27.5	24
South Dakota	73,000	\$550,000	1	8
Tennessee	518,000	\$3,610,000	31.5	25
Texas	1,640,000	\$11,573,000	66	97.5
Washington	662,000	\$4,236,000	24.5	24.5
Wisconsin	396,000	\$2,965,000	16	20

Sources: Veteran population source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment status of veterans 18 years and over by state, 2013 annual averages. JVSG allocation for fiscal year 2012: U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training, Veterans' Program Letter No. 02-11 for program year 2012. FTE source: States' JVSG plans 2010 – 2014 and annual modifications.

DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; FTE = full-time equivalent; JVSG = Jobs for Veterans State Grants; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative.

Hiring of veterans' representatives. States used one of three models, characterized by varying levels of SVC involvement, for hiring and supervising the JVSG staff. First, in eight states, the SVC reported that he or she determined the number of veterans' representatives each local area could hire, but the SVC did not directly hire or supervise them. Rather, other regional or state workforce agency staff hired and supervised the DVOP specialists and LVERs, with guidance from the SVCs. SVCs might provide support to veterans' representatives, but day-to-day operations of the JVSG program largely fell under the purview of regional JVSG staff or

state workforce agency local supervisors. In this model, SVCs had limited influence on the daily operations of the JVSG program at the local level.

In a second model, used in 10 states, SVCs did not necessarily play a role in the supervision of veterans' representatives, but they were involved in hiring decisions. For example, in Michigan, although regional veterans' program managers managed the DVOP specialists and LVERs in their regions, candidates for those positions submitted their applications through the state's regular hiring portal. State-level staff—including the SVC—then screened and hired them for open veterans' representative positions. According to state staff, this hiring approach increased the state's applicant pool for veterans' representative vacancies.

A third model, used only in Louisiana, consisted of the SVC hiring and supervising all LVERs in the state. The SVC also directly hired DVOP specialists, but AJC managers or regional JVSG staff were responsible for their daily supervision. The state-managed LVERs and state veterans' staff, including the SVC and his or her deputy, were considered to be a "virtual team," and, unlike the DVOP specialists, their responsibilities were not limited to their geographic area.

Allocation of veterans' representatives. According to SVCs interviewed, they determined the number of veterans' representatives for each of the two positions and allocated those positions across local areas based on available data and their own knowledge. Across the 19 study states, 11 had more full time DVOP specialist positions, which tended to have lower salaries, than LVER positions (Table II.1). In determining a preliminary geographic allocation, the SVCs indicated that they first examine the distribution of the veteran population in the state and consider overall population density, the location of military installations, and prior demand by veterans for services.

All SVCs reported considering additional factors when determining the final number of DVOP specialist and LVER positions and where to place them across the state. For example, they considered the estimated number of veterans who are about to separate from the military and the locations of large employers that might hire veterans. SVCs of several states also reported assigning veterans' representatives to local areas based on the number of local areas or AJCs in the state. For example, Illinois stationed one LVER in each local area. In New Jersey, each AJC had a minimum of one DVOP specialist and a half-time LVER.

In some states, SVCs reported that the relative number of LVERs and DVOP specialists was also driven, in part, by the business services programs funded by the WIA and ES programs. For example, one SVC reported that, because the state had reduced its business services staff in other programs, they hired more LVERs than DVOP specialists so they could reach more employers. Alternatively, in states with comprehensive business services efforts, more DVOP specialists than LVERs might be employed so that the JVSG was not providing redundant business services. For example, according to state staff, New York reduced the number of LVERs relative to DVOP specialists due to increased numbers of ES regional business services teams.

Other states have rebalanced the distribution of LVERs and DVOP specialists to better align with federal policy and guidance. Michigan's attempts to readjust the distribution of DVOP specialists and LVERs illustrate this dynamic. Historically, Michigan had more LVERs than

DVOP specialists; at one time, 60 percent of the state's veterans' representatives were LVERs. In addition, of the two positions, the LVER position was at a higher pay grade. Respondents from Michigan indicated that this reliance on LVERs rather than DVOP specialists reduced veterans' access to case management services, and since LVERs received higher salaries, this reliance on LVERs reduced the overall number of positions that could be funded. Therefore, the state was readjusting its distribution of DVOP specialists and LVERs to increase the overall staffing level and to meet veterans' case management service needs.

Most states hired staff for full-time positions; however, to cover rural areas with small veteran populations, SVCs in seven states reported funding part-time positions. In one of these states, part-time veterans' representatives worked exclusively for the JVSG program. SVCs in the other six states noted that the part-time veterans' representatives also worked for other state programs, such as ES or UI. SVCs from all of these six states expressed concern that these part-time staff struggled to balance their veteran and nonveteran responsibilities.

D. Types of staff members serving veterans and their training

Veterans in the study's 28 local areas across the 19 states received services from veterans' representatives, as well as from staff members from WIA and other AJC partners. The role of staff and their preparation to serve veterans is important in understanding veterans' experiences in the workforce system.

1. Roles of DVOP specialists and LVERs

In about three-quarters of the local areas in the study, DVOP specialists and LVERs had different roles and responsibilities. In these areas, veterans' representatives and their supervisors reported that DVOP specialists conducted in-depth assessments of veterans' needs and employment barriers, provided case management when it was warranted, developed individual employment plans, and worked to remedy barriers while also helping the veterans develop their resumes and job search skills. DVOP specialists conducted outreach to veterans, especially in places where they were likely to find veterans with barriers. For example, across the local areas, DVOP specialists reported that they visited U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, community-based Vet Centers that are part of the VA, homeless shelters, and veteran service organizations. LVERs, on the other hand, focused on connecting with employers, marketing AJCs' business services, and coordinating with AJC business services teams. They worked on job development for recently separated veterans and for veterans that DVOP specialists or other AJC staff had deemed job ready.

The degree of differentiation between the roles of DVOP specialists and LVERs varied across these local areas, however. In about a quarter of the local areas in which DVOP specialists and LVERs had differentiated roles, DVOP specialists and LVERs reported that while they each primarily focused on their standard duties, if a customer needed or wanted to see a veterans' representative, the LVER would work with the customer if the DVOP specialist was unavailable. Similarly, if the LVER was not available, the DVOP specialist might talk with an employer who expressed interest in hiring veterans. Particularly in areas where AJCs had only one person in one of the roles, or where veterans' representatives rotated among AJCs, the roles overlapped more. In these areas, both types of staff members conducted activities assigned to each of the roles, but in varying proportions.

Staff in about half of the remaining quarter of the local areas reported blending the roles of DVOP specialists and LVERs. Staff in these local areas and states felt that sharing responsibilities would better serve their customers. For example, in one local area where it was rare to have both a DVOP specialist and an LVER present in an AJC, both types of veterans' representatives regularly performed the same duties. The nondifferentiation of duties in this local area also occurred in AJCs where both types of veterans' representatives were present. In general, the veterans' representatives in this local area felt that DVOP specialists and LVERs were each fully competent to provide all LVER and DVOP specialist services. This allowed veterans' representatives to provide broader geographic coverage and services both to employers and to veteran customers, regardless of their designated role. In addition, they expressed concern that if they were only allowed to perform the tasks of one of the roles, they would be insufficiently busy, would not be providing as much service to veterans as possible, and would be at risk of being co-opted into doing non-JVSG work. In the remaining local areas, veterans' representatives did not clearly indicate the extent of shared roles and responsibilities.

2. Other AJC staff

Across local areas, the JVSG staff were not the only AJC staff providing services to veterans. The WIA, ES, and other partner program staff served veterans as part of their regular responsibilities. In most of the local areas, staff working in the AJCs viewed serving veterans as the responsibility of all staff members, from the front desk greeter to the WIA counselor. For example, when meeting with a customer, a WIA counselor might learn that the customer is a veteran and then work to provide appropriate WIA services to meet his or her needs. Three reasons were given for this shared responsibility: (1) it was dictated by state or local policy, (2) the AJC could provide the highest level of service to veterans only if everyone was trained and able to serve veterans, and (3) the veterans' representatives would be able to focus on serving the veterans with the greatest barriers to employment if other staff served veterans without barriers or with lower levels of need. Therefore, all AJC staff members had to understand veteran customers' barriers and service needs and how they might differ from those of nonveteran customers.

3. Shifting staff roles

Changing federal and state policies affected staff members' responsibilities at the local level. For example, shortly before study visits took place, federal law changed TAP so that LVERs and/or DVOP specialists no longer taught TAP classes and, as described above, many local areas were working to align their staffing with DOL guidance. These changes resulted in a shifting of assignments and the geographic distribution of people in these positions. In addition, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funding, some local areas had created additional WIA and ES staff positions. Although the JVSG program did not receive ARRA funding, additional ARRA-funded staff members were able to serve more veterans with few or no barriers to employment, giving DVOP specialists increased ability to focus on veterans with more barriers. Thus, the loss of ARRA funds required shifting of the remaining ES and WIA staff members, as well as JVSG staff members, between roles and across geographic locations, and often required programs to make do with fewer staff members.

These shifts placed pressures on staff. In some local areas, staff members across programs had to learn new positions; familiarize themselves with new sets of employers, community organizations, and customer groups; and develop relationships and work habits with new colleagues. The decreased staffing in some areas also led to the staff members who were retained after the funding cuts covering the work responsibilities of multiple positions. In addition, some local area managers discussed their plans to rotate staff through outlying local areas to bring these staff members to underserved areas, at least occasionally. Furthermore, in some local areas, staffing cuts particularly affected the business services unit, sometimes leaving the LVER (and possibly the AJC manager when he or she had time) as the only staff members available to conduct outreach to employers.

4. Staff training

Veterans' representatives and other AJC staff received different amounts and types of training on serving veterans. DVOP specialists and LVERs received training at the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), a VETS-funded training center at the University of Colorado Denver established in 1986 to develop the skills of veterans' employment and training service providers. Veterans' representatives complete an online NVTI "Orientation to Veteran Services" course before they travel to Denver to attend introductory courses at NVTI, which is mandated to occur within their first 18 months of employment. The Denver-based classes, which each take place over several days, cover such topics as case management, counseling, POS, and outreach. Veterans' representatives can receive follow-up training from NVTI, and they also reported receiving additional training from their SVCs.

In contrast, non-JVSG AJC staff in most local areas reported receiving mostly ad hoc training on serving veterans. The most commonly mentioned form of training was sessions conducted by veterans' representatives, usually LVERs. These sessions covered such topics as how to identify POS-eligible customers and provide POS, how to identify barriers, and the services and programs for veterans provided by other organizations to which veterans may be referred. In addition, staff members in several of the local areas mentioned that, when AJC managers receive training or information related to veterans, AJC managers are instructed to share what they learned with their staff. AJC managers, as well as LVERs and staff members from other programs, then used all-staff meetings to train their staff members and to provide information addressing topics relevant to serving veteran customers, such as policy changes, how different programs operate, upcoming events, and needs for assistance. In addition to these ad hoc trainings, some state staff reported that instructions on serving veterans and information on veterans' programs has or is being included in state-developed training materials for all new state workforce hires and in staff manuals.

E. State management information systems for the JVSG

To facilitate JVSG monitoring and reporting, states used management information systems (MIS). These systems were used to monitor services provided to veterans, track veteran customers, and, in some cases, share information regarding veterans across DOL-funded programs. Based on a review of states' plans, all states relied upon their MIS, coupled with in-person field visits, to monitor their JVSG programs. Veterans' representatives were required to update their state's MIS so that SVCs could complete and submit the ETA 9002 report and the VETS 200 report.

In addition to their monitoring and reporting functions, MIS were reported to provide full or partial access across workforce programs in 18 states. Although veterans' representatives worked with case managers and business services teams from other AJC programs, they did not necessarily use or have access to the same system. Consequently, veterans' representatives and AJC staff members may have limited information on a particular customer or employer. As described in Section A of this chapter, 16 of the 19 states in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation administered their workforce programs, including the JVSG, through their state workforce agencies. Although these programs usually were administered through the same agency, full MIS accessibility across programs was not present in all of these states.

Based on VSS interview data, we defined three categories of states' MIS accessibility across programs:

Full accessibility. In 12 study states, the same MIS tracked veteran and nonveteran customers across workforce programs and, AJC staff members had access to all entered information, including case notes and provided services, for a given customer. For example, Mississippi's and Wisconsin's systems were used to record services provided by multiple workforce programs, including WIA, ES, JVSG, and TAA. Although staff could see all information regardless of their program affiliation, they nearly always had read-only access for tracking fields and notes associated with another program. In a subset of these states, the MIS also tracked contacts with employers and time spent working with them.

Partial accessibility. Six states provided staff members with partial accessibility to customer data across programs—they either used the same MIS for capturing data across programs with access levels based upon program or role, or they used multiple systems but provided staff members from different programs with limited access to all systems. Of the six states with partially accessible systems, three had one MIS but partially restricted access by program, and three had multiple systems that allowed limited access across programs. Missouri is an example of a state with one system; however, staff members' access was determined by their program affiliation. Therefore, staff members from different programs did not have complete access to case notes regarding individual customers being served across DOL-funded programs. Likewise, in Georgia, veterans' representatives could see all notes and services provided to veteran customers. However, WIA staff could only see basic notes about veteran customers served by DVOP specialists or LVERs. Texas is an example of a state with multiple systems. In that state, veterans' representatives and WIA staff used the same system to track services provided to customers. However, case management was tracked in different systems. Therefore, JVSG and non-JVSG staff members could see services provided to individual customers, but they could not review detailed case management notes for individual customers provided by staff from other programs.

No accessibility. The remaining state in the study (Illinois) used separate systems for different programs and also did not provide access to these systems across programs. In Illinois, WIA is operated by a different agency than other DOL-funded programs. Therefore, WIA services were tracked separately from those provided through the JVSG and ES. WIA staff could not access the system housing JVSG information, and JVSG staff could not access the WIA system. However, as of July 2014, these agencies established data-sharing agreements to allow read-only access to portions of their systems.

III. LOCAL AREAS' PROVISION OF SERVICES TO VETERANS

Ensuring that veterans—including those who recently separated and those who served years ago—have access to the resources and supports they need to achieve gainful employment has become a priority of the national workforce system. Although federal and state governments can provide policy and guidance on how and when to serve veterans, it is the local staff of programs, such as WIA, ES, and JVSG, who are implementing these policies and providing services to the veteran customers.

Using interview data from site visits to the 28 local areas and administrative data described in Chapter I, this chapter provides a descriptive analysis of local areas' services to veterans. First, it describes activities to reach out to veterans and veterans' awareness of, and introduction to, services. Then, it describes characteristics of veteran customers both from staff reports and the administrative data. Next, it presents veterans' receipt of services and the special and targeted services that states and local areas provide to improve veterans' employment outcomes. Finally, it summarizes employment outcomes data.

A. Outreach to veterans

Across the study's local areas, DVOP specialists and LVERs both reported reaching out to veterans by attending veteran events, being outstationed at military bases and other organizations that serve veterans, and connecting with other organizations that work with veterans. Veterans' representatives in all local areas reported hosting veterans-only job fairs and attending job fairs hosted by other organizations, such as chambers of commerce, to notify veterans of services available through the JVSG program.

Similarly, respondents cited outstationing as a key form of veteran outreach. In states with military bases, SVCs outstationed veterans' representatives on the bases to connect veterans transitioning from military service to the JVSG program. Across most local areas, veterans' representatives (usually DVOP specialists) were outstationed at other organizations serving large veteran populations for a portion of their time. For example, a DVOP specialist was permanently outstationed at the VA regional center in Milwaukee to facilitate referrals between the VA's vocational rehabilitation and employment (VR&E) program and services provided through the AJC.⁷

Veterans' representatives also reported working closely with veterans' service organizations to increase awareness of AJC services among members, identify veterans, and generate jobs for these veterans. For example, in the Lower Savannah (South Carolina) local area, the LVER held informational meetings at the American Legion, and the DVOP specialist conducted outreach at the Community Ministry of North Augusta. In the New Orleans (Louisiana) local area, the local Vet Center provided an LVER with space every Tuesday from which to reach out to veterans. In the First Coast (Florida) local area, veterans' representatives reported attending Yellow Ribbon reintegration events and other large gatherings of veterans. They went to these events in mobile

⁷ Through the VR&E, veterans receive rehabilitation services. Many of these veterans have significant barriers to employment. When they are deemed ready to seek employment by the VA's VR&E program, either after rehabilitation or as a part of rehabilitation, they are referred to the state workforce agency for employment services.

workforce vans equipped with laptops, Wi-Fi, and other tools to share information on employment and training opportunities and provide immediate services. In addition, veterans' representatives from all local areas indicated that they maintain informal, referral-based relationships with these types of veterans' organizations.

Beyond reaching out to all veterans, veterans' representatives also engaged in specialized outreach to subpopulations of veterans, such as homeless and incarcerated, or formerly incarcerated, veterans. SVCs in eight states mentioned homeless veterans as a targeted service group, and veterans' representatives in those states described outreach efforts intended to connect homeless veterans in their areas with services delivered through the JVSG program. Veterans' representatives (usually DVOP specialists) in these states regularly visited homeless shelters in their areas to provide services to veterans and sometimes were outstationed at these facilities. For example, Georgia stationed a full-time DVOP specialist at an Atlanta homeless shelter to meet the service needs of homeless veterans. In addition, DVOP specialists and LVERs in six local areas reported participating in regular Stand Down events, during which service providers come together to provide homeless veterans with supportive services, such as food, clothing, medical care, and job search assistance.

States and local areas also conducted specialized outreach to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated veterans through services and programs. Seven states identified incarcerated or formerly incarcerated veterans as target populations in their state JVSG plans. They helped this population through a range of services, from less intensive services (such as bonding assistance) to more intensive programs to help offenders transition out of prison. Box III.1 describes these states' special targeted initiatives. Veterans' representatives from seven local areas also reported that they hosted workshops at prisons in their areas for soon-to-be-released veterans.

Box III.1. Outreach and targeted services to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated veterans

- **Working with veterans in a minimum-security dormitory.** At the Indiana Veteran's Education and Transition Unit, an all-veteran minimum-security dormitory facility in Indianapolis, veterans' representatives worked one-on-one and with groups of inmates to provide reemployment services and help these inmates transition to the community. This unit also partnered with the VA for assistance with benefits and health care, had an internal American Legion post, and engaged volunteers from the veteran community.
- **Coordinating with the Department of Corrections.** Veterans' representatives from Georgia worked with the state's Department of Corrections to provide services through The Offender and Parolee State Training and Employment Program (TOPSTEP). This program was intended to help offenders transition back into society by providing resource and support information, academic and vocational instruction, and job placement services.
- **Conducting outreach in state prisons.** DVOP specialists in Illinois delivered services through the state's Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program, which required DVOP specialists to conduct employment workshops for veterans who would be released from prison within 18 months. This program included employer outreach on behalf of veterans who were ex-offenders.

Source: VSS site visits, 2013.

B. Veterans' awareness of, and introduction to, AJC services

Veterans' expectations of the services they will receive and their first introduction to the AJC and staff can affect their longer-term experiences with the public workforce system. This section explores veterans' and staff members' apparent knowledge of POS and how veterans were identified for, introduced to, and assessed for services.

1. Veteran awareness of priority of service when seeking services

WIA and JVSG staff across the local areas in the study perceived that most veterans knew little about POS before visiting an AJC. According to staff, the few veterans who were aware of POS when initially entering the AJC had learned about it through their attendance in TAP as they were about to leave their service, from online research, or through applying for unemployment benefits. Similarly, during focus groups, veterans generally did not indicate that they were aware of POS before coming to an AJC. Those already familiar with POS reported having learned about it online or by word of mouth.

Although veteran-related signage was common in AJCs visited, not all AJCs displayed signage that fully explained POS. For example, posted materials did not always state that veterans were eligible for POS (instead, they simply asked veterans to identify themselves), and even fewer signs explained what POS was and the eligibility requirements for it. Staff in nearly all local areas stated that eligible customers would be informed of POS and what it entitled them to when they declared their veteran status (typically, at the front desk or during their intake assessment). During focus groups, veteran customers confirmed that they learned about POS after first entering the AJC. On subsequent visits, these customers knew to identify themselves to receive POS and to go directly to veteran-related materials and tools.

2. Local staff knowledge of priority of service policies and eligibility

Most of the staff interviewed, including WIA, ES, and JVSG staff, appeared familiar with POS and their role in providing it, but they were not always able to define eligibility. For example, not all staff members we interviewed could define exactly who was eligible for POS, although most had a basic understanding of this and a plan for whom to ask if they were unsure of the details. The least well understood area was JVA's definition of a POS-eligible spouse. The most common misunderstanding was that it was a spouse of any veteran or current service member, or the spouse of a deceased service member, rather than the specific definition included in the JVA (see Chapter I). In a few cases, staff members thought veterans needed 180 days of active-duty service, instead of just one day, to be POS eligible or seemed uncertain about how Reserve and National Guard service should be handled (their inclusion is based on federal activation). These limited uncertainties about eligibility seemed to have little impact, however, because they usually involved infrequently seen categories of customers, and the staff who were uncertain were not making regular triage decisions.

Staff in all local areas reported taking veterans and eligible spouses at their word about their status and providing POS on that basis. None required them to show DD Form 214 (DD-214)

(the record of their discharge)⁸ or other proof of status until they tried to enroll in a funded activity, such as training or intensive services with a veterans' representative. Occasionally, local area staff requested that veterans bring their DD-214 on their next visit so it could be stored in their file and be available if needed later, rather than risking a delay at a critical juncture. DVOP specialists and LVERs reported regularly helping veterans obtain replacement DD-214s or providing information to the veterans on how to do so. Veterans' representatives in at least two local areas reported helping veterans try to upgrade their discharges from something less than honorable to qualify them for available programs or jobs.

Staff in many local area AJCs expressed a commitment to serving veterans and indicated a desire to go above and beyond for them, even in the absence of POS. No staff expressed displeasure at the existence of POS or opposition to implementing it. However, some staff members wondered how effective it was (because it does not provide additional services or waive any requirements, and often there is no wait for services in those local areas for any customer) and thought that more could be done for veterans.

3. Identification of veterans

Local areas used multiple methods to identify veterans when they first walked into the center and then throughout the veterans' experiences at the AJCs. Staff in all centers said they attempted to identify veterans as they entered the center and, in about half of the centers visited during the study, signage on the doors, walls, or front desk encouraged veterans, and sometimes their spouses, to identify themselves for POS or other services.

Most local areas (all but one) relied on sign-in or information sheets for veterans to self-identify. The approaches to identifying veterans during the initial AJC sign-in process included:

- **Single sign-in sheet.** In the most common approach, all customers (including veterans) signed in on a single sheet, which often asked the reason for their visit, whether they had visited previously, and information on veteran status, among other things.
- **Information form.** In the next most common approach, AJC staff asked each entering customer to complete a form (in addition to other more general forms) that asked about veteran status, as well as some combination of additional personal and military service-related information, such as period and duration of service, presence of a service-connected disability, and character of service (for example, whether served honorably or less than honorably). These forms varied considerably in their scope and were sometimes used in conjunction with a sign-in sheet.
- **Veteran-specific sign-in sheet.** In fewer local areas, veteran customers signed in on a separate sign-in log specifically for veterans.
- **Self-identification.** In the final approach, AJC staff from one local area did not inquire about veteran status, and veterans were expected to self-identify without prompting.

⁸ DD Form 214 is officially called "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty." It is issued by the Department of Defense and serves as a complete record of a service member's time in the military, trainings and schools completed, military occupation specialty, awards, promotions, deployments, separation codes, and reenlistment eligibility codes.

Once veterans were identified, staff used various techniques to easily identify veteran customers on an ongoing basis. Staff in three local areas said they color coded veterans' forms and intake materials to make it easier to identify veterans throughout their AJC experience. This enabled staff to provide POS by pulling these forms and sending the veteran customers to see staff or to workshops first. These colored forms also allowed staff to see at a distance which customers were veterans.

State MIS often identified customers as veterans even before those customers came into an AJC; in general, staff used the paper-based and computerized systems in conjunction with one another. Customers were initially registered into these computer systems in several ways. Often, customers who received UI or UCX payments had at least an initial profile set up automatically via a transfer of information between those systems. Typically, other first-time visitors to AJCs were asked to self-register on AJC computers as the first step in visiting the AJC. In AJCs that issued swipe cards to customers, AJC staff completed the initial registration when activating the card. Some other first-time customers had accessed sections of the workforce system's website from home and, therefore, had already registered and created a profile in the system. In some local areas, this online registration contained the same questions as the paper-based registration; in others, however, it included more, or different, questions. For example, some paper registrations simply had checkboxes to mark if the person was a veteran, was an eligible spouse, or had a disability, but some online registrations also asked about period of service, branch, and character of service; about each of the qualifying conditions to be an eligible spouse; and about the presence of a service-connected disability and its rating.

Although veterans were generally identified during initial intake, veterans not identified then might be identified when working with AJC staff members. In some cases, AJC customers may not have thought they qualified for POS when registering, may have been uncomfortable disclosing their veteran status, or may have fallen through the cracks in the initial intake process. Staff across local areas reported that, when a customer was identified as a veteran after initial intake, he or she was given the relevant information about the availability of veterans' representatives and POS, and their veteran status and information was recorded in the MIS so they could receive services related to veterans. If the veteran objected to being labeled in the MIS as a veteran, then the customer's veteran status would not be recorded and he or she would be unable to receive POS.

4. Initial assessment, staff assignment, and customer flow

In most of the 28 local areas, staff gathered additional information on veterans and eligible spouses after initial identification, with the occasional exception of those who only wanted to use the resource room. The information gathering could take various forms and was conducted by different staff members. At its most basic, this entailed the front desk greeter reviewing the intake materials to determine whether the person should be seen by a veterans' representative or another kind of staff member.

In two states, however, veterans' representatives and AJC staff mentioned that, at certain centers, a veteran service navigator (VSN), modeled after a disability program navigator,⁹ provided initial services to veterans eligible for JVSG services. In these centers, the VSN met with each veteran identified at the front desk; gathered additional information about the veteran's military service, barriers, interests, and goals; probed to determine whether the veteran was connected with the VA or other organizations that provide benefits such as medical care, housing assistance, and transportation; and oriented the veteran to the resources and staff available in the AJC. The VSN then used this information to make the appropriate referral within the AJC. VSNs sometimes checked in with customers later to make other referrals if the veteran had needs that were not being met and to provide additional information.

In addition, in about half of the local areas without a VSN, another AJC staff member—most commonly a DVOP specialist—conducted an in-depth assessment, similar to that done by VSNs, of all new veterans and eligible spouses. The staff member then referred the veteran to the most appropriate program staff member based on such factors as the presence of barriers, desire for training, and job readiness. In most local areas that have veterans' representatives conduct these assessments, staff indicated that, although many veterans were ultimately served by nonveteran representative staff, the veterans' representatives were best able to conduct these initial assessments. They felt that the veterans' representatives were better able to develop rapport, obtain accurate information, uncover any barriers, and decide if the veteran's situation warranted service by a DVOP specialist or if they could be well served by an ES or WIA staff member.

C. Characteristics of veterans

Based on LERS administrative data on AJC users, about 1.7 million people exited the ES program in the study local areas between 2011 and 2012, and 116,467 (or 7 percent) of these were veterans. On average across the local areas, these veterans were mostly male (88 percent), white (56 percent), and were 35 years or older (75 percent) (Table III.1). Almost all (97 percent) had completed high school or attended further schooling, and 13 percent had service-connected disabilities. Veterans who received JVSG and ES services differed little from those who only received ES services, except that JVSG veterans were 4 percentage points more likely to have a service-connected disability (Appendix Table D.38). Compared to nonveteran AJC customers, veterans were older (28 versus 12 percent were age 55 or older) (Appendix Table D.37). They also were more likely to be white (50 versus 37 percent), and had somewhat higher levels of educational attainment (56 versus 43 percent had attended some college or more).

⁹ Disability program navigators facilitate integration of services in AJCs for people with disabilities by aiding both staff and customers, serving as a resource on community programs to aid employment, bringing together multiple partners, and improving linkages to employers as part of a joint ETA-Social Security Administration program.

Table III.1. Demographic characteristics of veteran ES program customers in study local areas (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Demographic characteristics			
Gender			
Male	88.4	82.5	93.0
Female	11.6	7.0	17.5
Age			
18–24	5.9	1.8	9.2
25–34	19.0	11.3	25.0
35–44	19.6	14.2	24.8
45–54	27.0	20.7	39.6
55–64	21.5	16.1	32.8
65 or older	7.0	3.6	16.1
Race/ethnicity			
White, non-Hispanic	56.1	9.3	92.9
African American, non-Hispanic	24.1	2.2	72.7
Hispanic	8.0	0.8	36.5
Other	11.8	1.6	84.7
Had a disability	31.2	3.2	100.0
Education level			
Below high school	3.3	1.1	9.4
High school diploma or GED	44.0	21.7	68.2
Some college	38.2	17.5	55.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	14.5	7.8	23.6
Service-related characteristics			
Recently separated veteran	25.7	3.5	100.0
Post-9/11 veteran	48.5	6.9	100.0
Campaign veteran ^a	44.9	0.8	100.0
Service-connected disability	13.2	4.2	31.2
Sample size	116,467		

Source: LERS data for program year 2012, quarter 4. Includes data from 25 of the 28 study local areas.

Note: This table includes veteran customers of the ES who exited the program between July 2011 and March 2012. The average column contains the average across the local areas' percentages for each characteristic. The minimum and maximum columns contain the lowest and the highest percentage of the corresponding characteristic across the 25 study local areas. We were able to conduct our analysis across only 25 local areas using the ES data, because 3 local areas were in two states (Georgia and Michigan) that did not report the local areas in which customers were served.

^aCampaign veterans served on active duty in military campaigns. See Appendix B for a full definition.

CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development.

Across the study local areas, WIA staff and veterans' representatives did not perceive many differences between different groups of veterans, but they did identify a few. They perceived that younger veterans were more technologically savvy than older veterans, most likely due to the younger veterans' military experience and personal technology usage. Staff also said that the younger veterans were more likely than older veterans to want to attend school or training, most likely because younger veterans had several available sources of educational funding and were at the beginning of their civilian careers. Staff also perceived that female veterans, like their

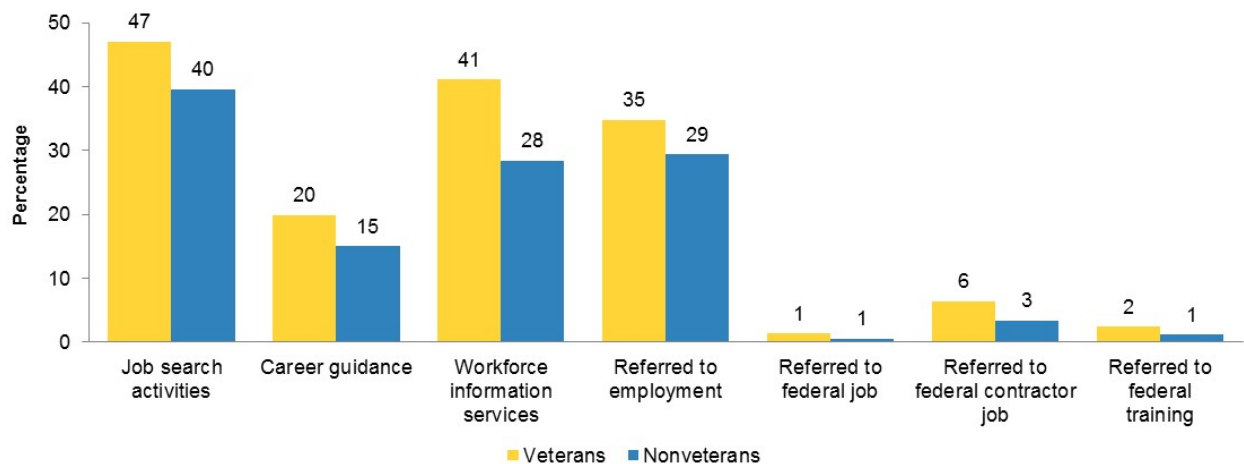
civilian counterparts, were more likely than male veterans to be raising children alone and facing the child care challenges that can affect training and employment.

Staff in local areas perceived two main differences between veterans and nonveterans. The first difference was that, although younger veterans typically lacked civilian work experience compared to their nonveteran peers, their military experience often resulted in a more useful skill set than that of their peers' prior civilian jobs. The second difference was that veterans tended to be more organized and disciplined than nonveterans. Staff also mentioned that a noticeable share of veterans had service-connected disabilities.

D. Veterans' receipt of ES and WIA services

According to LERS administrative data, veteran AJC customers in the local study areas were more likely than nonveterans to receive staff-assisted core services.¹⁰ Eighty-two percent of veteran AJC customers in the local study areas who exited ES between 2011 and 2012 received staff-assisted core services. ES staff-assisted core services were provided by DVOP specialists to 9 percent of veterans and by LVERs to 5 percent of veterans. The other staff-assisted core services were provided by ES staff. The most frequently provided staff-assisted services were job search activities, workforce information services, and referrals to employment (Figure III.1). Veterans were more likely than nonveterans to receive each of these services. For example, 41 percent of veterans received workforce information services compared to 28 percent of nonveterans. Twenty-three percent of veterans received ES intensive services compared to 14 percent of nonveterans (Appendix Table D.47).

Figure III.1. Comparison of staff-assisted core services receipt in local study areas, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)



Source: LERS data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Includes data from 25 of the 28 study local areas, because 3 local areas were in two states (Georgia and Michigan) that did not report the local areas in which customers were served. Less than .5 percent of veterans and nonveterans were placed in a federal job, placed in a federal contractor job, or placed in federal training.

¹⁰ Through the ES, customers receive three tiers of service: (1) self-services, such as use of the resource room; (2) staff-assisted core services, such as career guidance and job search activities; and (3) intensive services, which are the same types of services as staff-assisted core services, but given in a higher intensity to customers not successful at securing employment through use of staff-assisted core services.

According to the WIASRD data, veteran customers exiting WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in the local study areas between 2011 and 2012 were more likely than nonveterans to receive WIA intensive services (36 versus 32 percent) and training services (9 versus 7 percent) (Appendix Table E.45). They also differed in the type of occupation for which the training was intended. Thirty-four percent of veterans received training for employment in mechanical and transportation occupations, compared to 20 percent of nonveterans. In addition, 7 percent of veterans received training for service positions, compared to 15 percent of nonveterans. Local area staff reported that veterans tended to receive the same basic types of services, such as case management and training, as did nonveterans.

E. Special access and targeted services for veterans

Although veterans and nonveterans might generally access the same AJC services, such as job counseling, referrals, and training, veterans sometimes received special access and targeted services that focused on veterans' employment. These veteran-focused services and access were (1) POS, (2) military to civilian skills translation, (3) other veteran-only services, and (4) outreach to employers on behalf of veterans.

1. Priority of service

Local areas across the study relied on their MIS when implementing POS, and the flags placed on the records of veterans were useful in several ways. In local areas where front desk staff used computers to confirm or create registrations for each person entering the AJC, the visible flag allowed them to ensure that POS was provided and the customer routed appropriately to the next available and appropriate staff member. When assigning workshop spaces or limited funds to customers, the flag provided an easy sorting mechanism to ensure that veterans moved to the top of the list. The veteran flag in the job-matching systems might be visible to employers, allowing them to identify veterans who have come up in their search results for a particular job opening or to search specifically for veterans.

Staff from across most local areas reported that one way veterans received POS was that their state job matching system placed 24- or 48-hour holds on new job listings so that veteran customers could see and apply for new listings before other customers. In these areas, it was common for a staff member or an automated program to look for good matches between new listings and veterans, then send an email or an automated phone call to the veterans making them aware of the match. Some staff members felt that the holds gave veterans a head start in applying for job openings; others, however, felt they were ineffective because many employers wait until a certain date to review the applications submitted for a position, so getting the application in early does not matter.

AJC staff reported that they usually could accommodate all customers interested in scheduled workshops, so they rarely needed to prioritize access to veterans. If workshops become popular and require more space than is available, or in sites where this is already the case, AJC staff said they would implement POS by reserving slots for veterans, notifying veterans before others about the workshop schedule, or assigning slots to veterans first after receiving all customers' workshop requests. However, all local area staff interviewed said they would not bump an enrolled customer from a workshop in favor of a veteran, but would find another way to accommodate everyone. Staff of one AJC said that they do make special

accommodations for veterans. They email the workshop schedule to veterans, but all other customers only learn of the schedule by picking up a paper copy when visiting an AJC.

2. Military to civilian skills translation

Staff members from all local areas and veterans from several of the local areas indicated that military skills translation is critical for their transition to civilian employment. This supports other research indicating the importance of this service (Prudential Financial, Inc. 2012). Consequently, DVOP specialists, as well as AJC case managers, spent considerable time exploring the skills veterans acquired during their military service so that they could help translate military jargon into civilian terms. Staff members noted that veterans' resumes often required revisions to demonstrate how military skills applied to civilian jobs. They also provided veterans with interview practice so that they could explain their experiences to employers in civilian terms that aligned with the requirements of a prospective job.

To help translate military skills, staff members, regardless of program affiliation, reported using available tools and conversations with veterans about their past experiences. Both DVOP specialists and LVERs, who were almost always veterans themselves, reported using tools but said that their own military knowledge and experience were most helpful. Because of their own experiences, they understood the key knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with military jobs. In addition, they knew the specific questions to ask veterans to better understand their military experience and how it relates to civilian opportunities. At times, veterans' representatives said they translate the military jargon into civilian terms without referencing other tools. Non-JVSG staff members reported relying more on those tools to help in the translation.

For those staff members who relied on tools, the most commonly cited one was O*NET. Staff members from 18 local areas reported using it while working with veterans. The O*NET crosswalk tool allowed staff members and veterans to identify occupations closely associated with veterans' military experiences. Through this crosswalk tool, case managers could enter a specific military occupation and then review closely associated civilian occupations. O*NET profiles included the tasks, knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with a given occupation.¹¹ Although staff members most commonly cited using O*NET, they also indicated using other DOL tools and resources, such as My Next Move for Veterans and the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Some staff members also reported using other nonfederal online tools to help in translating veterans' military skills. For example, staff in the Indianapolis (Indiana) local area reported using cTORQ to assist with military skills translation. cTORQ creates employment recommendations using a person's previously acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities. cTORQ is used for all customers but also includes a tool that maps military skills with civilian skills.¹² Staff members from the California local areas referenced using Vets 101 to conduct skills translation. Vets 101 is a publicly available tool funded by the California Department of Rehabilitation, the California

¹¹ For more information, see www.onetonline.org.

¹² For more information, see www.torqworks.com.

Employment Development Department, and the California Health Incentives Improvement Project to provide career-planning assistance to veterans.¹³ It also connects California's veterans to available veterans' services.

3. Other veteran-only services

Although veteran customers could access all services available to nonveteran customers, some local areas also offered veteran-only services, which were often available to covered spouses as well. One such service was veteran-only job fairs, which veterans' representatives from all local areas said they hosted. LVERs from many local areas reported that, for these job fairs, they recruited employers who have a history of hiring veterans, providing high wages, and providing benefits to employees and who have jobs currently available. In some cases, job fairs also connected veterans to additional services. For example, the Southwest Corner Pennsylvania local area hosts veterans' expos intended to provide networking opportunities, as well as information on veterans' benefits, supportive services, and employment services. Veterans' representatives from most local areas also said that they participate in the "Hiring our Heroes" job fairs sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Other local areas provided additional veteran-only services. For example, three local areas hosted veteran-specific job clubs, in which veteran customers could discuss their job search strategies and offer one another support and tips in the job search process. Staff from nine local areas reported hosting veteran-specific workshops on such topics as civilian resume writing, interviewing skills, and occupational transitions.

Two states and one local area provided on-the-job training (OJT) for veterans. Missouri sets aside state funds for recently separated veterans to be placed in OJT. As described by respondents from the Central Region (Missouri) local area, veterans' representatives conducted outreach for this OJT program, and WIA staff members handled the administrative components, such as developing the OJT contract. In 2012–2013, state staff reported that 69 Missouri veterans participated in this statewide program. Respondents from the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Counties (Wisconsin) local area also indicated that a portion of OJT funds were reserved for recently separated veterans, as they are considered dislocated workers. At the time of the site visit, 48 veterans had been placed in OJT positions. Similarly, the Texas Veterans Commission implemented Skills for Veterans, a statewide initiative in Texas to improve the skills of post-9/11 veterans in local areas' target occupations. Through this initiative, employers applied for training funds for their newly hired post-9/11 veterans and then coordinated the training courses or programs with a community college, technical school, or the Texas Engineering Extension Service. According to state staff, one of the main goals of the initiative was to build the capacity of these schools to provide the types of training and education that are in demand by veterans.

4. Outreach to employers on behalf of veterans

Outreach to employers served two key purposes in the 28 local areas in the study: (1) identifying job placements for veteran customers, and (2) understanding how participants in the JVSG program could meet employers' needs. Work with employers to identify job placements for veteran customers was typically completed by both LVERs and local area

¹³ For more information, see www.vets101.org.

business services staff. In contrast, outreach to employers to promote the advantages of hiring veterans was nearly always completed by LVERs. These functions were intended to be complementary, as LVERs cultivated employer relationships to eventually place veterans in jobs with these employers.

Coordination between LVERs and other local area business services staff differed across the local areas. In about two-thirds of the local areas, the LVERs enjoyed some level of coordination with the business services staff. According to LVERs, the purposes of coordination were to avoid accidentally contacting the same employers and/or to share contacts and decide which staff member was more likely to succeed with a particular employer. This coordination looked different across local areas, as the following examples show:

- In the Capital Region (New York) local area, a staff member said that business services representatives usually contacted a business first and then shared the information gathered with the LVER. The LVER would then contact the business about employment for specific veterans.
- In the Indianapolis (Indiana) local area, the LVER reported to the AJC's business services manager. The LVER participated in weekly meetings with the business services team and worked closely with them to coordinate employer outreach.
- State-level staff in Illinois conducted outreach to the largest employers in the state, obtaining job orders from them and advocating for hiring veterans. An LVER explained that he therefore focused on local and smaller employers and encouraged coordination with local area business services staff. The LVER and local area business services staff shared information on their upcoming events and had monthly meetings to discuss job-ready veterans and other topics.
- In Texas, the Texas Veterans Commission assigned a staff person to four of the five regions to coordinate regional-level contacts with human resources managers at large, regional businesses. Therefore, these managers could work with only one staff person instead of several at multiple local areas. This allowed local veterans' representatives to focus their outreach on smaller, local employers.

In one-third of the local areas, LVERs and ES staff both described markedly less communication and information sharing across programs than the staff of the other local areas. Thus, in these local areas, staff of different programs could be attempting to establish relationships with the same employers instead of coordinating their efforts. An LVER in one local area postulated that contacts were not shared for fear that the other staff member would get there first and get credit for the listing with that employer.

Beyond the required employer outreach, LVERs also tried to make employers recognize the benefits of hiring veterans. They reported advertising special programs and initiatives to employers, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the VA's Special Employer

Incentives (SEI) program, that encourage employers to hire veterans.¹⁴ An LVER in one local area mentioned that he sometimes has better results with employers than WIA business services staff, because the employers like the WOTC and “have a soft spot for veterans.” An LVER in another local area said that fast-food chains and other large corporations have the infrastructure to be able to take advantage of the tax credits but that they are too labor intensive and difficult for smaller employers to pursue.

F. Veterans' outcomes

Despite the advantages that veterans might have had, both in terms of their pre-program characteristics and services received, according to the LERS data, veteran and nonveteran customers exiting from the ES program in the study local areas had similar employment and earnings outcomes. For example, 53 percent of veteran customers and 54 percent of nonveteran customers secured employment in the first post-program quarter (Table III.2). In addition, 64 percent of veterans and 68 percent of nonveterans secured employment within the first three quarters after exiting. Veterans had average post-program quarterly earnings (averaging over three post-exit quarters) of \$4,183, compared to \$3,488 for nonveterans.

Table III.2. Labor market outcomes of ES program customers in study local areas, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)

Labor market outcome	Veterans	Nonveterans
Post-program employment (percentages)		
Employed in first quarter after exit quarter	52.5	54.4
Employed within three quarters after exit quarter	64.3	68.4
Employed in all three quarters after exit quarter	42.3	43.5
Sample size	116,467	1,558,481
Post-program quarterly earnings (dollars)		
Average earnings in first quarter after program exit	3,899 (7,021)	3,122 (6,680)
Median	392	479
Average post-program quarterly earnings	4,183 (6,230)	3,488 (5,858)
Median	1,695	1,569
Average change in quarterly earnings ^a	-1,156 (8,629)	-943 (7,506)
Median	0	0
Sample size	116,467	1,558,481

Source: LERS data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Includes data from 25 of the 28 study local areas, because 3 local areas were in two states (Georgia and Michigan) that did not report the local areas in which customers were served. Standard deviations are in parentheses below mean outcomes.

^aAverage change in quarterly earnings is calculated as the difference between average pre-program quarterly earnings and average post-program quarterly earnings.

CY = calendar year.

¹⁴ Veterans were one of eight WOTC target groups. Before legislative authority for WOTC expired on December 2014, employers could receive Federal tax credit for hiring employees from these groups. The SEI provides the employer who hires a veteran with reimbursement of up to 50 percent of the veteran's salary to cover expenses in providing training and losses in production due to training status, tools and equipment, appropriate accommodations, and support during training and placement of the veteran.

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IV. CHARACTERISTICS, SERVICE RECEIPT, AND OUTCOMES OF VETERANS SERVED IN PENNSYLVANIA

In previous chapters, we described the provision of services to veterans in the local areas involved in the study. In this chapter and the next, we provide an in-depth examination of veteran customers in two study states. Our use of the WISPR system data, piloted in Pennsylvania and Texas, allows us to explore the characteristics, services, and outcomes of veteran customers of the ES and the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in one data set, rather than presenting separate pictures of veteran customers of the ES and the veteran customers of the WIA programs. This is important as customers can receive both ES and WIA services. In addition to the qualitative data collected during site visits to local areas in 2013, these analyses used WISPR data from the fourth quarter of program year 2012. We restricted our analyses to customers who exited the programs between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012.

This chapter provides the in-depth analysis of veterans in Pennsylvania (Chapter V provides the analysis for Texas). First, using site visit interview data, we provide an overview of service provision in Pennsylvania. Second, relying on the WISPR data, we describe the demographic and pre-program characteristics of veterans who exited from the ES and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs during 2011 and 2012.¹⁵ Third, we examine the associations between customer characteristics, local area characteristics, and the receipt of services. Finally, we explore the relationships between service receipt and outcomes. Throughout, we compare Pennsylvania veterans to national data when relevant. Appendix F provides additional tables on the WISPR data for Pennsylvania.

A. Overview of veterans' service provision in Pennsylvania

Using the qualitative data collected during site visits to the study local areas, we provide an overview of (1) the organizational structure for veterans' services, (2) veterans' introduction to services, (3) services provided to veterans, (4) services provided to employers on behalf of veterans, and (5) data management for the JVSG.

1. Organizational structure for veterans' services

Similar to the organization in most other states (see Chapter II), the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I), Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) oversaw the implementation of the JVSG (in addition to other employment programs) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Within BWPO, the Organizational Development department guided implementation of the core JVSG program components and interpretation of federal statute and policies. The Operations department monitored the work of veterans' representatives in the field, and the Performance Accountability department provided performance reporting and monitoring of JVSG.

Three layers of managers oversaw the work of the veterans' representatives and staff of other state-administered employment programs, such as ES and TAA, in PA CareerLinks (Pennsylvania's name for the AJCs). These managers were:

¹⁵For simplicity, we refer to the time period between April 1, 2011, and March 31, 2012, as "2011–2012."

- **Assistant regional directors.** In each of the state’s three regions, one or two assistant regional directors enforced federal and state statutes in the region’s local areas.
- **BWPO supervisors.** BWPO supervisors were assigned to PA CareerLinks throughout the state and supervised the day-to-day program functions of the state staff at the centers. The supervisors addressed all personnel issues, such as disciplinary actions, grievances, and time off requests, in their PA CareerLinks.
- **PA CareerLink site administrators.** The PA CareerLink site administrators usually were local contract staff, but could be the BWPO supervisor. The site administrator organized, directed, and managed the day-to-day operations of the PA CareerLinks by ensuring that resource room services were adequately managed and services were delivered similarly across the local area. The site administrator coordinated staffing plans across partner programs to ensure that partner program staff members were available to serve their customers.

The BWPO supervisor and the site administrator jointly recruited and hired veterans’ representatives, with final approval from the assistant regional director.

The three Pennsylvania local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation—Central Pennsylvania, Northwest Pennsylvania, and Southwest Corner Pennsylvania—had three to five assigned veterans’ representatives each. Each local area had one LVER, while two local areas had two DVOP specialists and one local area had four DVOP specialists.

2. Veterans’ introduction to PA CareerLink and its services

Similar to procedures in other local areas, veterans visiting a PA CareerLink for the first time typically were met by the center greeter (usually an ES staff member or a participant in the Senior Community Service Employment Program [SCSEP]) and were asked to sign in.¹⁶ The greeter asked the reason for the visit and whether the customer was a veteran or the spouse of a veteran. In two of the study’s local areas, Central and Northwest Pennsylvania, a “triage” approach was implemented for new center visitors. Each new customer met with a triage specialist who conducted a mini-assessment to identify the customer’s service needs and whether the customer was part of any special service population(s), such as veterans, so referrals to partner programs could occur immediately.

At the time of the VSS site visits in summer 2013, veteran customers seeking additional services in the three study local areas typically met with an available veterans’ representative, a DVOP specialist or LVER, to learn about the services available at the center and about the veterans’ program. In local areas with a triage approach, people identified as veterans or spouses of veterans during triage or at sign-in were referred to a DVOP specialist or LVER, if one was available. If neither a DVOP specialist nor an LVER was available, a resource room staff person helped the veteran. For local areas that did not have a triage approach, people who wanted to use the resource room on their own could do so; however, veterans usually were encouraged to meet with a DVOP specialist or LVER during their first visit.

¹⁶ Under the Older Americans Act, seniors participating in SCSEP can develop skills and abilities while being paid for time spent in nonprofit or government organizations.

During the initial meeting, the veterans' representative informed customers about available veterans' services and conducted an assessment to learn about the customers' needs and any barriers to employment. The assessment determined whether the customer could be served well by PA CareerLink resource room staff or other partner-funded staff, or whether the customer required additional assistance from a veterans' representative. Most veterans continued to work with a veterans' representative even if they were referred to partner-funded programs, such as WIA, for services. Site visit respondents at the PA CareerLinks reported that DVOP specialists and LVERs were trained on the needs of veterans and could work to ensure veterans' service needs were met. If a veteran was interested in training and seemed to be a good fit for WIA, the customer was referred to a WIA counselor, but the assigned veterans' representative would follow up with the veteran to help with employment options.

Most of the greeter stations in PA CareerLinks had signage that encouraged veterans or covered spouses to identify themselves during the sign-in process. For example, in one PA CareerLink, the greeter station had a sign hanging from the wall and pamphlets that discussed POS for veterans and their covered spouses. In addition, PA CareerLinks in Northwest Pennsylvania had sign-in sheets that asked people to designate if they were a veteran. If a person self-identified as a veteran or a spouse of a veteran, he or she was moved to the top of the queue to see a triage specialist in the PA CareerLink, use a resource room computer, and/or meet with a veteran's representative. Like nonveteran customers, veterans could also register to attend orientation workshops offered by PA CareerLinks in the state.

All customers visiting a PA CareerLink resource room or meeting with center staff registered in Job Gateway, the state's job matching system that is part of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Registration in CWDS' Job Gateway requires customers to respond to questions that identify and mark the person as a veteran. The Job Gateway collects customers' basic demographic data and tracks their online job matching services; program case managers entered services the customers received.

3. Services provided to veterans

In Pennsylvania, DVOP specialists and LVERs had roles similar to those described in Chapter III. The LVERs focused on employer outreach and community awareness, individualized job development activities with employers, and outreach activities to recently separated veterans at special recruitment events held by the military. DVOP specialists focused on intake, helping veterans identify their transferrable skills and match them to available jobs, and case management activities. Because of the number of PA CareerLinks in a local area, LVERs and DVOP specialists sometimes were asked to cover more than one center and handled tasks usually done by the other as the need arose. If a DVOP specialist or LVER were unavailable, PA CareerLink staff delivered services and scheduled follow-up appointments for veterans or their covered spouses to meet with a DVOP specialist or LVER.

Veterans' representatives described the five key services that they provided to veterans. First, DVOP specialists and sometimes LVERs worked one-on-one with veterans to develop an individual employment plan (IEP) that (1) contained short and long term goals, and (2) tracked and documented achievement of goals. Second, they referred veterans to other programs, such as programs for homeless veterans and programs that provided supportive services (for example, child care, transportation assistance, and medical and mental health assistance). Third, they worked with veterans to help them identify their transferrable skills and match those skills to civilian job listings. Fourth, they alerted veterans to new job listings in the Job Gateway system, which placed veterans at the top of the applicant pool list and designated them with an American flag beside their name. DVOP specialists and LVERs sent email notices to veteran customers of new job order postings that appeared suitable for them. Finally, all three study local areas hosted job fairs and/or "meet and greets" for veterans and employers. In the Southwest Corner Pennsylvania local area, for example, veterans' representatives coordinated a Veterans Expo to connect veterans and their families to career and educational opportunities. The expo included service providers offering benefits and supportive services to veterans, on-site networking opportunities with employers, and on-site employment services assistance, including resume development, interviewing skills, and job search training.

Most veteran services described above usually were available to veterans in other local areas in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania veterans, however, could also access special grant programs operating in geographic areas throughout the state. For example, through the Federal Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), eligible veterans could receive up to 12 months of employment and training assistance. In addition, targeted veteran grant opportunities were available to help homeless, incarcerated, and disabled veterans reintegrate into the workforce. Many of these targeted grants, however, operated only in Pennsylvania's larger cities, such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

4. Services to employers on behalf of veterans

Pennsylvania was one state in which local business staff across federal- and state-funded programs worked together, as L&I encouraged all its local areas to create business service teams (BSTs). These teams, comprised of staff from multiple programs, served as a single coordinating unit for outreach and services to their local business communities. LVERs in all three study local areas reported serving on their local BSTs and providing general outreach to employers. Given an LVER's responsibility for a large geographic area, the use of cross-functional teams provided for more market penetration and allowed employers across the entire local area to learn about services and programs that could benefit their businesses.

In general, the BSTs in all three of the local areas involved in the study worked to advance employers' knowledge and use of the PA CareerLink system and help them identify job-ready applicants. The BSTs were the primary points of contact with employers and marketed all available services, including, but not limited to, veterans' services, to the business community. If an employer showed interest in hiring veterans, an LVER from one of the local areas usually was called in to assist the employer directly. They used Job Gateway to match veterans with existing jobs and used WorkKeys and O*NET to determine if the job seekers' skills matched the needs of the business customer.

The BSTs also pre-screened job applicants for employers by reviewing resumes submitted for job openings. LVERs reported being judicious when referring veterans for job openings that “fit” the veterans’ skill set. The LVERs stated that finding veterans the “right job” is important to ensuring that veterans can transition from military careers to civilian life.

5. Data management

Pennsylvania’s CWDS, implemented in 2007, is a state management information system used across the state’s DOL-funded programs. In addition to collecting information on JVSG services, it is the primary data collection and report tool for TAA; the National Farmworker Jobs Program; WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Public Welfare (operates the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program); Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR); and ES.

CWDS has many functions for job seekers, employers, and program staff at the state and local levels:

- After registering and creating a profile with basic demographic information on the system, job seekers may access information about local programs and services, gather labor market information, receive career exploration assistance, and conduct job searches.
- After they register, employers can upload job openings and conduct searches for qualified candidates. The system is automatically set up to place veterans at the top of the qualified candidate list, if the employer’s search criteria are met.
- State and local program staff members use the system to document program intake and eligibility, load assessment results, manage participant case notes, track program services and produce reports (both federal and ad hoc reports). CWDS allows program staff to create, print, and update customers’ IEPs. In addition, staff can scan and upload documents, such as veterans’ DD-214, into the system.

Although staff members across DOL-funded programs use CWDS, state and local staff members have varying levels of access, to ensure data confidentiality. Central office staff and PA CareerLink center staff from across a wide array of employment and training programs can view general information about customers, including labor exchange services. OVR and WIA information can be accessed and viewed by staff only from within those program areas and is not accessible to all PA CareerLink staff. Therefore, DVOP specialists and LVERs could view some information about services provided to their clients through other programs, but they could not see all case notes related to the provision of workforce services to veteran customers.

B. Veterans' characteristics

In Pennsylvania, nearly 18,000 (or 9 percent) of the nearly 204,000 customers exiting from the ES and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs during 2011–2012 were veterans.¹⁷ Nationally, 1,700,000 of more than 15 million customers exiting the ES program, and 127,000 of the 1.6 million customers exiting WIA programs, were veterans. Nearly all Pennsylvania veterans were enrolled in the ES program (99.7 percent) and just over 7 percent were enrolled in the WIA programs (3 percent in the Adult program and 5 percent in the Dislocated Worker program).¹⁸

It is important to present demographic and pre-program characteristics of these veterans so that the composition of veteran customers may be better understood and used to inform the treatment of veterans who participate in the ES and WIA programs. In the following section, we describe the characteristics of these veteran customers exiting from the ES and/or WIA programs. We first compare veterans and nonveterans, referencing differences with national data when relevant. We then compare the characteristics of veterans in four subgroups selected because of their policy relevance: (1) JVSG status, (2) time since separation, (3) gender, and (4) veterans' service-connected disability status.

In Pennsylvania, veteran customers were much more likely than nonveterans to be male, older, and have a disability. For example, most veterans were age 45 and older, and most nonveterans were younger than age 45 (Table IV.1). Nationally, veterans were more likely to be younger than 45 than older. (See Appendix Table D.1 for more comparisons with national data.) Pennsylvania veterans and nonveterans had similar pre-program earnings, racial/ethnic distributions, employment status at participation, and unemployment claimant status (although due to the large sample size, there were statistically, but not substantively, significant differences).¹⁹ Nationally, veterans were more likely than nonveterans to have at least some college schooling.

About one-quarter of Pennsylvania veterans served on or after September 11, 2001. In addition, 12 percent were recently separated from the military and 36 percent were campaign veterans (that is, were on active duty during combat) (Table IV.1).²⁰

¹⁷ We excluded customers who only received self-services from most of our analyses because of potential differences across local areas in when customers are entered into databases. See Appendix Table F.1 for a comparison of characteristics of veterans who only received self-services to those who received more than self-services.

¹⁸ Additional calculations by authors not shown in tables.

¹⁹ We defined a substantive difference as a difference of at least five percentage points.

²⁰ See Appendix B for the definitions of post-9/11 veterans, recently separated veterans, and campaign veterans, as well as definitions of the other variables used in our analysis.

Table IV.1. Characteristics of Pennsylvania ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Characteristic	Veterans	Nonveterans
Demographic characteristics		
Gender		
Male	91.6**	55.8
Female	8.4**	44.2
Age		
18–24	4.2**	17.0
25–34	14.5**	24.3
35–44	19.2**	21.4
45–54	29.8**	22.3
55–64	24.3**	12.4
65 or older	8.1**	2.6
Race/ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	72.8**	70.4
African American, non-Hispanic	16.6**	14.7
Hispanic	2.7**	6.2
Other	7.9**	8.7
Had a disability	13.3**	2.3
Education level		
Below high school	2.1**	7.9
High school diploma or GED	59.0**	53.2
Some college	28.6**	24.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.3**	14.5
Service-related characteristics		
Recently separated veteran	11.9	n.a.
Post-9/11 veteran	24.6	n.a.
Campaign veteran	36.1	n.a.
Service-connected disability	9.7	n.a.
Pre-program characteristics		
Average pre-program quarterly earnings		
None	29.2**	24.6
\$1 to \$2,499	18.7**	23.3
\$2,500 to \$4,999	15.2**	17.1
\$5,000 to \$7,499	12.0**	13.5
\$7,500 to \$9,999	8.7	8.7
\$10,000 to \$19,999	14.2**	10.8
\$20,000 or more	2.0	1.9
Employment status at participation		
Employed	18.1**	19.7
Employed, but received notice of termination	1.3	1.3
Not employed	80.6**	79.0
Unemployment insurance claimant status		
Claimant, referred by WPRS	39.6	39.4
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	20.9**	16.1
Exhaustee	3.3**	2.9
Not a claimant	36.1**	41.6
Sample size	17,801	186,191

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted chi-squared tests to assess differences across columns in the distributions in variables with more than two categories—age (categorical), race/ethnicity, education level, average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment status at participation, and unemployment insurance claimant status—and only performed t-tests to detect differences between individual categories when the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$). CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Veteran subgroups. We compared veterans' characteristics within the four subgroups:

1. **JVSG veterans (veterans who received at least one service from a DVOP specialist or LVER) were more likely to be post-9/11 veterans, campaign veterans, and have a service-connected disability than were non-JVSG veterans (veterans who did not receive any services from a DVOP specialist or LVER).** For example, 40 percent of JVSG veterans were campaign veterans, as opposed to 27 percent of non-JVSG veterans (Table IV.2). In addition, JVSG veterans were more than twice as likely as non-JVSG veterans to have a service-connected disability. The increased rate of service-connected disability among JVSG veterans is not surprising, considering that having a disability is one factor that qualifies a veteran to work with a veterans' representative.
2. **Recently separated veterans were more likely to be campaign veterans and young than veterans who separated from military service longer than three years before program entry.** For example, 90 percent of recently separated veterans were younger than 45, compared to 81 percent of post-9/11 veterans who separated more than three years prior, and 22 percent of pre-9/11 veterans (Table IV.2).
3. **Female veterans were less likely to be non-Hispanic white than were male veterans, but more likely to have some post-secondary schooling and be young.** For example, 65 percent of female veterans were non-Hispanic white, compared to 74 percent of male veterans (Table IV.3). In addition, 57 percent of female veterans had at least some college schooling and 48 percent were age 45 or older compared to 37 percent and 63 percent, respectively, of male veterans.
4. **Veterans with a service-connected disability were less likely to be non-Hispanic white than were veterans without a service-connected disability, but more likely to be a campaign veteran, have low pre-program earnings, and be young.** Nearly two-thirds of veterans with a service-connected disability were non-Hispanic white, compared to three-quarters of veterans without a service-connected disability (Table IV.3). Forty-nine percent of veterans with a service-connected disability were campaign veterans and 54 percent were 45 years or older, compared to 35 percent and 63 percent, respectively, of veterans without a service-connected disability. Forty-three percent of veterans with a service-connected disability had no pre-program quarterly earnings, a 15 percentage point difference with veterans without a service-connected disability.

Table IV.2. Characteristics of Pennsylvania veteran ES and WIA program customers, by JVSG and separation status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Characteristic	JVSG status		Separation status		
	JVSG	Non-JVSG	Recently separated	Post-9/11, but not recently separated	Pre-9/11
Demographic characteristics					
Gender					
Male	91.6	91.6	88.3	88.4**	92.7
Female	8.4	8.4	11.7	11.6**	7.3
Age					
18–24	4.8**	2.9	32.4**	2.6**	0.0
25–34	14.4	14.7	43.3**	58.6**	2.5
35–44	18.0**	21.6	14.4**	19.8	19.8
45–54	29.6	30.0	8.1**	14.7**	35.7
55–64	24.3	24.1	1.7**	3.6**	31.3
65 or older	8.8**	6.6	0.0**	0.7**	10.6
Race/ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	70.6**	77.4	72.4	71.4	73.1
African American, non-Hispanic	17.8**	13.9	10.7**	15.2*	17.7
Hispanic	2.9*	2.3	5.1	4.8**	2.0
Other	8.6**	6.4	11.9**	8.5*	7.2
Had a disability	15.5**	8.8	15.6**	22.4**	11.4
Education level					
Below high school	2.0	2.3	0.5	0.6**	2.6
High school diploma or GED	59.3	58.4	61.2**	53.1**	59.6
Some college	28.3	29.4	30.3*	33.7**	27.5
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.5	9.9	8.0**	12.7**	10.3
Service-related characteristics					
Recently separated veteran	13.9**	7.8	100.0**	0.0	0.0
Post-9/11 veteran	26.3**	21.1	100.0	100.0**	0.0
Campaign veteran	40.2**	27.4	73.8**	57.6**	26.5
Service-connected disability	11.7**	5.7	11.2**	18.5**	8.0
Pre-program characteristics					
Average pre-program quarterly earnings					
None	30.7**	26.1	32.7	30.1	28.5
\$1 to \$2,499	18.3*	19.7	16.3**	22.2**	18.5
\$2,500 to \$4,999	14.1**	17.4	11.4**	16.2	15.6
\$5,000 to \$7,499	11.5**	13.2	7.6**	12.6	12.7
\$7,500 to \$9,999	8.3**	9.6	7.9	7.2**	9.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999	14.9**	12.7	22.6**	10.7**	13.5
\$20,000 or more	2.2**	1.4	1.5	1.1**	2.2
Employment status at participation					
Employed	15.0**	24.5	14.7**	22.5**	17.9
Employed, but received notice of termination	1.2	1.3	2.6**	1.1	1.1
Not employed	83.8**	74.1	82.6**	76.4**	81.0
Unemployment insurance claimant status					
Claimant, referred by WPRS	41.6**	35.4	42.8**	31.7**	40.4
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	21.0	20.8	19.8	17.9**	21.6
Exhaustee	2.6**	4.8	3.3	2.9	3.4
Not a claimant	34.8**	38.9	34.1**	47.5**	34.5
Sample size	12,000	5,801	2,118	2,259	13,424

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted chi-squared tests to assess differences across columns in the distributions in variables with more than two categories—age (categorical),

race/ethnicity, education level, average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment status at participation, and unemployment insurance claimant status—and only performed t-tests to detect differences between individual categories when the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$). The asterisks indicate significant differences between the current and subsequent column (for example, the percentage post-9/11 but not recently separated reported in the “Post-9/11, but not recently separated” column has an asterisk if it is significantly different from the percentage pre-9/11 in the “Pre-9/11” column).

CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Table IV.3. Characteristics of Pennsylvania veteran ES and WIA program customers, by gender and service-connected disability status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Characteristic	Gender		Disability status	
	Male	Female	Service-connected disability	No service-connected disability
Demographic characteristics				
Gender				
Male	100.0**	0.0	87.3**	92.1
Female	0.0**	100.0	12.7**	7.9
Age				
18–24	4.0**	6.0	2.8**	4.3
25–34	14.0**	20.3	21.4**	13.8
35–44	18.6**	25.7	22.3**	18.9
45–54	29.5**	33.2	28.9	29.9
55–64	25.3**	13.4	21.1**	24.6
65 or older	8.7**	1.4	3.6**	8.6
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	73.6**	64.9	61.7**	74.0
African American, non-Hispanic	16.1**	21.4	23.7**	15.8
Hispanic	2.7	3.4	3.4	2.6
Other	7.7**	10.3	11.2**	7.5
Had a disability	12.8**	18.6	98.6**	4.1
Education level				
Below high school	2.2**	0.4	1.3**	2.1
High school diploma or GED	60.5**	43.0	48.2**	60.1
Some college	27.6**	39.5	33.3**	28.1
Bachelor's degree or higher	9.7**	17.2	17.2**	9.6
Service-related characteristics				
Recently separated veteran	11.5**	16.6	13.8*	11.7
Post-9/11 veteran	23.7**	34.2	38.0**	23.1
Campaign veteran	36.9**	27.2	49.1**	34.7
Service-connected disability	9.2**	14.8	100.0	0.0
Pre-program characteristics				
Average pre-program quarterly earnings				
None	29.1	30.3	42.8**	27.8
\$1 to \$2,499	18.5**	21.7	18.4	18.8
\$2,500 to \$4,999	15.1	16.3	12.1**	15.5
\$5,000 to \$7,499	12.0	12.5	8.9**	12.4
\$7,500 to \$9,999	8.8**	7.0	6.2**	9.0
\$10,000 to \$19,999	14.5**	11.1	10.4**	14.6
\$20,000 or more	2.0*	1.2	1.3**	2.0
Employment status at participation				
Employed	18.1	18.4	16.1*	18.3
Employed, but received notice of termination	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.3
Not employed	80.6	80.5	82.8*	80.4

Characteristic	Gender		Disability status	
	Male	Female	Service-connected disability	No service-connected disability
Unemployment insurance claimant status				
Claimant, referred by WPRS	39.7	38.1	32.1**	40.4
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	21.1	19.6	17.2**	21.3
Exhaustee	3.4*	2.5	3.0	3.4
Not a claimant	35.8**	39.9	47.8**	34.9
Sample size	16,311	1,490	1,728	16,073

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted chi-squared tests to assess differences across columns in the distributions in variables with more than two categories—age (categorical), race/ethnicity, education level, average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment status at participation, and unemployment insurance claimant status—and only performed t-tests to detect differences between individual categories when the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$). The asterisks indicate significant differences between the current and subsequent column (for example, the percentage with a disability reported in the “Male” column has an asterisk if it is significantly different from the percentage with a disability in the “Female” column).

CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

C. Descriptive and correlational analyses of veterans’ service receipt and outcomes

Veterans visit AJCs and avail themselves of ES and WIA program services to secure well-paying employment. Understanding the services they receive and how those services might be associated with their employment outcomes may shed light on the role of the current workforce system in serving veterans. Thus, using the WISPR data, we explore veterans’ service receipt and labor market outcomes to capture their experiences as AJC customers in the ES and WIA programs and after they leave the programs.

In this section, we analyze Pennsylvania veterans’ service receipt and their employment and earnings outcomes. First, we report on veterans’ service receipt and then compare service receipt of veterans and nonveterans and between the veteran subgroups. For each of the subgroup comparisons, except for the JVSG status subgroup, we also assess the service receipt differential between subgroups of veterans after adjusting for demographic and pre-program characteristics, and local area factors.²¹ Next, we present similar analyses of veterans’ outcomes, first presenting associations between veterans’ earnings and service receipt, comparing veterans’ and nonveterans’ outcomes, and then comparing outcomes between veteran subgroups. We also explore relationships between post-program outcomes, demographic and pre-program characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt.

²¹ We do not include JVSG veterans in our regression analysis because JVSG status is defined after a veteran customer comes to an AJC, based on whether he or she received services from a DVOP specialist or LVER, rather than on demographic and pre-program characteristics, which is how the other subgroups are defined.

1. Service receipt

We present our findings of veterans' service receipt by examining all Pennsylvania veterans, comparing veterans with nonveterans, and then examining differences within the veteran subgroups.

Two-thirds of Pennsylvania veterans received at least one service from a DVOP specialist or LVER, but fewer received intensive services and WIA-funded training. Thirty-six and 38 percent of veterans received staff-assisted core services from DVOP specialists and LVERs, respectively (Table IV.4). About one in five veterans received intensive services; only 4 percent received these services from a DVOP specialist and only 4 percent from an LVER. Only 4 percent of veterans received WIA-funded training.

Pennsylvania veterans' receipt of services was positively correlated with UI exhaustee status and employment at the time of program entry. A regression of service receipt by veterans on customer demographic and pre-program characteristics and local area factors found that UI exhaustee status and employment at the time of program entry were each highly correlated with receipt of the three most common services among veterans: (1) job search assistance, (2) workforce information services, and (3) referrals to federal contractor jobs. These characteristics were negatively correlated with receipt of job search assistance and workforce information services, and positively correlated with referrals to federal contractor jobs. For example, veteran customers employed at the time of program entry were 9 percent less likely to receive job search assistance and 12 percent less likely to receive workforce information services, controlling for customer characteristics and local area factors (Appendix Table F.41.A). Veterans employed at the time of program entry may not have needed assistance with job search assistance, which includes planning and executing a successful job search, because they would already have been familiar with such tasks given their previous success at securing employment. Exhaustees would also have had such experiences, because they had been receiving UI benefits from previously held jobs.

On the other hand, recently separated veteran status was positively correlated with receipt of job search assistance and workforce information services (Appendix Table F.41.A). These veteran customers may have been availing themselves of these services because they had been out of the civilian labor force and needed to become re-acclimated to (1) conducting a successful search for a job outside of the military (job search assistance), and (2) becoming familiar with the state and local labor market conditions (workforce information services).

Table IV.4. Service and training receipt of Pennsylvania veteran ES and WIA program customers (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)

Service receipt	Percentage
Received any service from DVOP specialist or LVER	67.4
Staff-assisted core services	
Received staff-assisted core services	100.0
Received staff-assisted core services provided by DVOP specialist	35.9
Received staff-assisted core services provided by LVER	37.5
Intensive services	
Received intensive services	21.4
Received intensive provided by DVOP specialist	3.8
Received intensive provided by LVER	3.5
Training services	
Received training	3.8
Focus of occupational skills training	
Managerial, administrative, professional, and technical	26.9
Service	4.1
Sales, clerical, and administrative support	6.3
Agricultural, natural resources, and construction	11.7
Mechanical and transportation	50.8
Not reported	0.1
Sample size	17,801

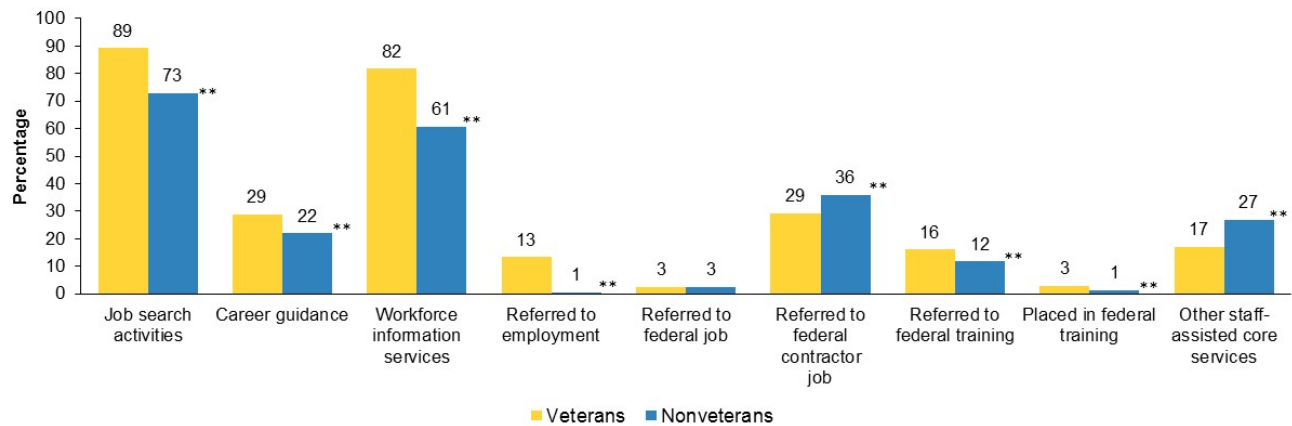
Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms.

CY = calendar year; DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative.

Veteran customers of the ES and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in Pennsylvania received most services at higher rates than did nonveteran customers. Veteran and nonveteran customers were each most likely to receive job search assistance and workforce information services (Figure IV.1). In each case, veterans received these services at rates nearly 20 percentage points higher than nonveterans (Appendix Table F.13). Nearly 90 percent of veteran customers received job search assistance, and 82 percent received workforce information services, compared to 73 percent and 61 percent of nonveterans, respectively. However, nonveterans were referred to federal contractor job listings, received other staff-assisted core services, and received intensive services at higher rates than veterans. Twenty-eight percent of nonveterans received intensive services, whereas only 21 percent of veterans did (Table IV.5). Compared to veterans nationally, Pennsylvania veterans received many services at higher rates, including job search assistance and workforce information services (see Appendix Table D.3).

Figure IV.1. Comparison of staff-assisted core services receipt of Pennsylvania ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Less than .5 percent of veterans and nonveterans were placed in a federal job or placed in a federal contractor job.

**Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Veterans and nonveterans received WIA-funded training services at similar rates: about 4 percent of both veterans and nonveterans received training (Table IV.5).²² However, the occupational categories in which they received training services differed. Half of veteran customers who received training were trained for employment in mechanical and transportation areas, compared to only 30 percent of nonveterans. Nonveterans were more likely than veterans to have received training in skills for managerial, administrative, professional, and technical professions (34 and 27 percent, respectively). These differences likely reflect the differing skills that veterans and nonveterans bring to training because they must, in part, have the skills and qualifications, as determined by a case manager, to be able to successfully complete training. Additionally, the differences in gender composition between veterans and nonveterans likely play a factor in these differences in training services. (See below for differences in WIA-funded training services between male and female veterans.)

²² With the WISPR (and WIASRD) data, it is not possible to completely identify the stream of funding providing training services because customers may co-enroll in multiple programs that provide opportunities for training. Among veteran customers who received training, 57 percent received funding through the WIA Dislocated Worker program, 26 percent received funding through the WIA Adult program, 28 percent received funding through the TAA, and 8 percent received funding through National Emergency Grants (NEGs), counting customers who were co-enrolled in multiple programs more than once. An important issue to note, though, is that, of veteran customers reported to have received training services, 11 percent were reported to have received funding only through ES, which does not fund training.

Table IV.5. Service and training receipt of Pennsylvania ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Service receipt	Veterans	Nonveterans
Intensive services		
Received intensive services	21.4**	27.9
Provided by DVOP specialist	3.8**	<0.1
Provided by LVER	3.5**	<0.1
Training services		
Received training	3.8	4.0
Focus of occupational skills training		
Managerial, administrative, professional, and technical	26.9**	34.2
Service	4.1**	13.7
Sales, clerical, and administrative support	6.3**	14.1
Agricultural, natural resources, and construction	11.7**	7.2
Mechanical and transportation	50.8**	30.3
Not reported	0.1*	0.5
Sample size	17,801	186,191

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Nonveterans include eligible spouses who may receive services from DVOP specialists or LVERs. See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted a chi-squared test on focus of occupational skills training to assess differences across columns in the distributions and only a performed t-test to detect differences between individual categories because the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$).

CY = calendar year; DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative; n.a. = not applicable.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Veteran subgroups. As described above, we examined receipt of services for four veteran subgroups. For these analyses of subgroups, except for the JVSG subgroup, we used a staged regression approach.²³ The analyses of service receipt had two stages:

- **Stage 1:** Estimate the unadjusted difference in service receipt between groups
- **Stage 2:** Adjust the difference for the demographic and pre-program characteristics of the groups, such as race/ethnicity and campaign veteran status, and local area factors, by including in the regression an indicator for each local area.²⁴

This analysis shows how much of the difference in service receipt is associated with differences between the groups in observed characteristics and local area factors. For example, it addresses whether the differences in service receipt between recently separated veterans and

²³ This method is similar to that used in Maxwell et al. (2012).

²⁴ The local area indicator captures unobserved differences between local areas, such as the unemployment rates and urbanicity.

veterans who separated more than three years before program entry can be explained by differences in the age, education, or other factors between the two subgroups of veterans.

1. **Pennsylvania JVSG veterans received most services in higher proportions than Pennsylvania non-JVSG veterans did.** For example, nearly all JVSG veterans (98 percent) received job search assistance, compared to 71 percent of non-JVSG veterans (Appendix Table F.14). However, JVSG veterans were less likely to be referred to a federal contractor job (25 versus 37 percent). Although JVSG veterans received WIA-funded training services at a lower rate than non-JVSG veterans (3 versus 6 percent), they both received training for the different types of occupations at similar rates.
2. **The service receipt differential between veterans recently separated and those separated for more than three years narrowed after adjusting for program characteristics.** Generally, recently separated veterans received services at higher rates than veterans who separated more than three years before program entry. For example, 89 percent of recently separated veterans received workforce information services, compared to 80 percent of post-9/11 veterans who were separated more than three years and 81 percent of pre-9/11 veterans (Appendix Table F.15). In addition, nearly 94 percent of recently separated veterans received job search assistance, compared to 87 percent of post-9/11 veterans who were separated more than three years and 89 percent of pre-9/11 veterans.

Differences in receipt of several services between recently separated veterans and those who were separated for more than three years before program entry (combining post-9/11 and pre-9/11 veterans who separated longer than three years before program entry) narrowed after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors in the second stage of the regression analysis. For example, the unadjusted estimate indicated that recently separated veterans were 13 percentage points more likely to receive staff-assisted core services from a veterans' representative than their counterparts (Appendix Table F.35). This difference decreased by six percent of the unadjusted nonrecently separated veteran mean after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors.²⁵ This suggests that recently separated veterans were more likely than veterans who separated longer than three years before program entry to have other customer characteristics that were associated with higher service receipt.

3. **Female and male veterans showed similar patterns of service receipt but differed in their focus of occupational skills training.** In the first stage, more than half of female veterans received training for managerial, administrative, professional, and technical occupations, compared to one-quarter of male veterans (Appendix Table F.16). Conversely, 54 percent of male veterans received training for mechanical and transportation occupations, compared to only 16 percent of female veterans. The already small service receipt differentials between females and males were not substantially affected by adjusting for customer characteristics and local factors in the second stage (Appendix Table F.36).
4. **Differences in service receipt observed by veterans' disability status narrowed after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors.** Veteran customers with

²⁵ In this subsection and the next, we express changes in service receipt and earnings differentials between subgroups of veterans as a percentage of the unadjusted mean of the group that receives more services or has higher unadjusted earnings when moving from one stage to another, to provide a sense of the scale of the change. See Appendix C for further discussion of this analytic technique.

and without service-connected disabilities showed similar patterns of service receipt for most services, but their receipt of referrals to federally-funded training differed (Appendix Table F.18). Thirty-two percent of veterans with service-connected disabilities received referrals to federal training, compared to only 14 percent of those without service-connected disabilities. This difference persisted to actual placements, with 10 percent of veterans with service-connected disabilities placed in federal training versus only 2 percent of veterans without service-connected disabilities. Veterans with service-connected disabilities were also more likely to be provided staff-assisted core services and intensive services by veterans' representatives. For example, 52 percent of veterans with service-connected disabilities received staff-assisted core services from DVOP specialists, compared to 34 percent of veterans without service-connected disabilities. This large differential is not surprising, because having a disability would qualify a veteran to work with a DVOP specialist.

Differences in service receipt between veterans with service-connected disabilities and those without one usually narrowed after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors. For example, when adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors, the difference between these veterans' receipt of staff-assisted services provided by a veterans' representative decreased from 15 to 10 percentage points (Appendix Table F.37).

2. Post-program employment outcomes

Although our discussion of veteran customers' service receipt provides insight into the veterans who received various ES and WIA program services, it would be incomplete without examining these veterans' employment and earnings outcomes after receipt of those services. In this section, we describe veterans' employment outcomes and explore associations between services received and these outcomes.

Any findings from these analyses are only suggestive in nature. Although we statistically control for variables available in the WISPR data set, there may be characteristics of the customers for which we do not have data that are associated with both service receipt and employment outcomes. Not controlling for these characteristics may lead to a spurious correlation between service receipt and outcomes. However, the analyses presented can suggest relations that exist among service receipt, customer characteristics, and local area factors, and between labor market outcomes and service receipt; and lead to areas to explore in further research.

Pennsylvania veterans' post-program earnings were positively correlated with pre-program earnings and employment at program entry. In a regression of veterans' average post-program quarterly earnings on customer demographic and pre-program characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt, we found that the largest predictor of post-program average quarterly earnings was pre-program quarterly earnings: the higher a veteran customer's pre-program earnings, the higher his or her post-program earnings. For example, veteran customers with pre-program earnings between \$7,500 and \$9,999 were predicted to earn \$2,658 more than veteran customers whose pre-program quarterly earnings were between \$1 and \$2,499, all else being equal (Table IV.6). Pre-program earnings are likely acting as a proxy for other customer characteristics, such as the customer's work experience and job performance. Employment at program entry was also highly correlated with post-program quarterly earnings: customers who

Table IV.6. Associations between earnings and selected customer characteristics and service receipt among Pennsylvania veteran ES and WIA program customers (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)

Variable	Dollars
Selected customer characteristics	
Recently separated veteran status	-524.47**
Average pre-program quarterly earnings (ref: \$1 to \$2,499)	
None	4.52
\$2,500 to \$4,999	813.12**
\$5,000 to \$7,499	1,664.67**
\$7,500 to \$9,999	2,658.13**
\$10,000 to \$19,999	4,335.87**
\$20,000 or more	7,708.03**
Employment status at participation (ref.: not employed)	
Employed	1,897.20**
Employed, but received notice of termination	1,161.49**
Unemployment insurance claimant status (ref.: not a claimant)	
Claimant, referred by WPRS	-337.81**
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	108.54
Exhaustee	-115.23
Service receipt	
Self-services	-49.78
Staff-assisted core services	
Job search activities	161.40
Career guidance	-214.41*
Workforce information services	167.87
Referred to employment	340.01**
Referred to federal job	-638.03**
Referred to federal contractor job	1,265.76**
Referred to federal training	-227.71
Placed in federal training	-21.23
Received other staff-assisted core services	-1,388.10**
Staff-assisted core service provided by DVOP specialist or LVER	-266.88*
Intensive services	
Received intensive services	88.67
Intensive services provided by DVOP specialist or LVER	274.98
Received WIA training	1,696.48**
Other services	
Pre-vocational activities	54.37
Received supportive services (including needs-related payments)	-337.08
Sample size	17,801

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. Estimates are based on linear regression models in which the dependent variable is average post-program quarterly earnings and the explanatory variables are the customer characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt. Regression accounts for clustering at the local area level. See Appendix Table F.42.A for regression coefficients of all explanatory variables included in regression, their standard errors, and additional regression information.

CY = calendar year. DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference from zero at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

were employed at the time of program entry earned an average of \$1,897 more than customers who were unemployed at the time of program entry, controlling for other factors.

Veterans' receipt of WIA-funded training, referral to federal contractor jobs, and referral to employment were positively correlated with post-program earnings. Veterans who received training—only four percent of veteran customers—had average post-program quarterly earnings that were an average of \$1,696 higher than veterans who did not receive training, holding all other factors constant (Table IV.6). One explanation for this finding is that WIA training services may help veterans find better paying jobs. However, another explanation is that veterans who were selected to receive training have characteristics that we do not control for and that are associated with higher earnings and, thus, the association between earnings and training is spurious. Receipt of a referral to federal contractor jobs was associated with earnings that were, on average, \$1,266 higher than veterans who did not receive a referral to federal contractor jobs, all else being equal. Again, this could be due to unobservable factors rather than the referral itself. Considering that only a select few veterans received referrals to federal contractor jobs (less than one percent), this suggests that these veterans might have had unobservable characteristics that caused them to receive these referrals, leading to their higher earnings (Appendix Table F.13). Referral to employment was also associated with earnings that were, on average, \$340 higher than veterans who did not receive a referral to employment.

Veterans' receipt of other staff-assisted core services and referral to federal jobs were negatively correlated with post-program earnings. Veteran customers who received other staff-assisted core services—such as reemployment services, federal bonding program services, job development contacts, referrals to educational services, and tax credit eligibility determination—earned an average of \$1,388 less than veterans who did not receive other staff assisted services (Table IV.6). This finding may result because of these veterans' characteristics that were unobserved in the WISPR dataset. For example, federal bonding program services help formerly incarcerated and other at-risk customers receive employment by indemnifying employers against any potential financial loss as a result of hiring an at-risk employee. These veterans may have a difficult time securing employment regardless of whether they participated in ES and WIA programs. Referral to a federal job was associated with earnings that were an average of \$638 lower than the earnings of veterans who did not receive these referrals. However, less than one percent of veterans received referrals to federal jobs (Appendix Table F.13).

Receipt of staff-assisted core services by DVOP specialists or LVERs was negatively associated with average quarterly earnings. Veterans who received staff-assisted core services by DVOP specialists or LVERs had earnings that were, on average, \$267 lower than for veterans who did not receive these services from veterans' representatives. Receipt of intensive services was associated with earnings that were an average of \$275 higher than earnings of veterans who did not receive intensive services from a veterans' representative. However, this finding was not statistically significant.

Pennsylvania veteran and nonveteran employment and earnings outcomes were similar. Similar percentages of veterans and nonveterans secured employment within the first post-program quarter: 61 percent of veterans were employed in the first quarter, compared to 63 percent of nonveterans (Appendix Table F.24). The percentage of nonveterans who secured

employment within the first 12 months after exiting the program was slightly higher than it was for veterans (79 versus 75 percent). Veteran and nonveteran customers had slightly different average quarterly earnings after leaving the ES or WIA programs, at about \$4,307 and \$4,074, respectively. The difference in earnings was similar to the difference in earnings between veterans and nonveterans exiting the ES program nationally. Nationally, veteran customers had average post-program quarterly earnings of \$3,848, compared to \$3,555 for nonveterans (Appendix Table D.27). (See Appendix D for more comparisons of Pennsylvania veterans to veterans nationally.)

Next, we analyzed outcomes for the veteran subgroups. The analyses of three of the four veteran subgroups' outcomes also include a staged regression approach like the one for service receipt, with the addition of a third stage in which we adjust for differences in service receipt. In addition to looking at the unadjusted difference in outcomes (stage 1) and the difference in outcomes after adjusting for characteristic and local area differences between the groups (stage 2), we examine the difference in outcomes that remains after adjusting for all characteristics and receipt of program services (stage 3). Comparing results from this stage 3 analysis with results from stage 2 shows how much of the difference in employment and earnings outcomes that could not be explained by customer and local area characteristics can be explained by the services received. If the difference in outcomes changes after controlling for service receipt, this suggests that differences in the amount, type, or value of services received differs between subgroups.

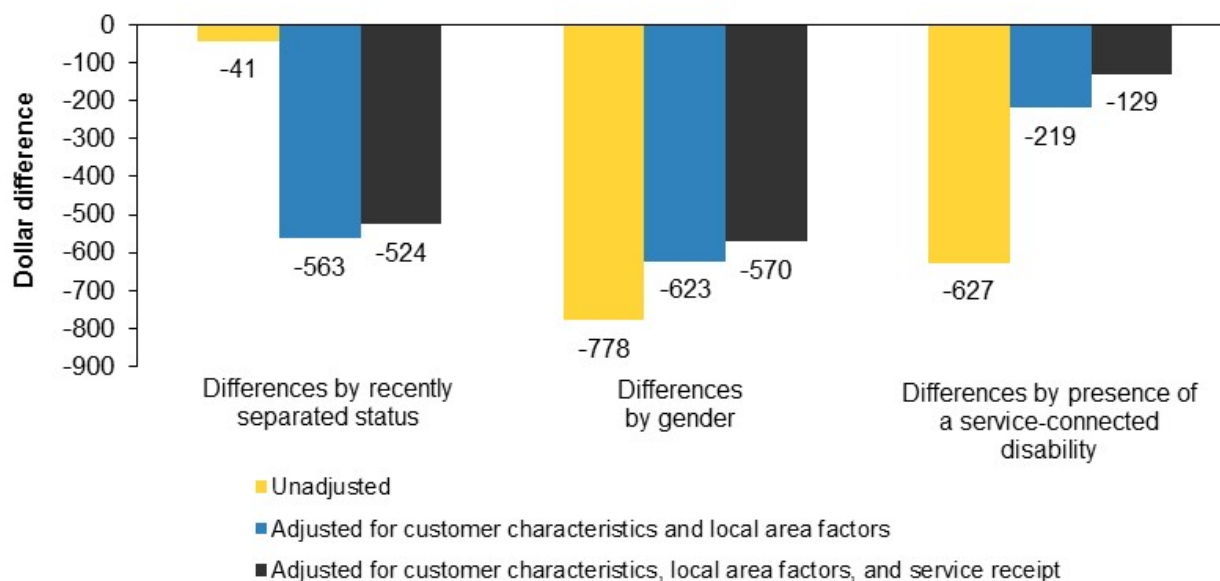
To illustrate how to interpret the findings from stage 2 to stage 3, consider the case where group A had \$500 less in average post-program quarterly earnings than group B after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors (stage 2 analysis). If the difference between the two groups grows even larger, say to \$750, after adjusting for service receipt (stage 3 analysis), one explanation is that the package of services that group A received has a stronger association with increasing their earnings than the services received by group B. A number of factors might create such a result. The services received by group A compared to those received by group B might have a stronger association with increased earnings in general than other services or the services might be more effective for group A than group B. Although we cannot distinguish the cause of the association, the result would suggest that group A might have been worse off without the services they received. If the difference between the two groups narrows, say to \$250, after adjusting for service receipt, this would suggest that group A was less likely to have received a package of services that was helpful in addressing the earnings differential.

1. **Pennsylvania JVSG veterans had lower unadjusted outcomes than non-JVSG veterans.** For example, 59 percent of JVSG veterans secured employment within the first quarter after exiting from the ES or WIA programs, compared to two-thirds of non-JVSG veterans (Appendix Table F.25). JVSG veterans earned an average of \$3,909 in the first quarter after program exit, compared to \$4,785 for non-JVSG veterans. This outcome most likely results because JVSG veterans tend to have more barriers to employment than non-JVSG veterans.
2. **The differential in earnings based on time since separation grew after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors.** Unadjusted employment rates and earnings were higher among post-9/11 veterans who were not recently separated from the military than among post-9/11 veterans who were recently separated or pre-9/11 veterans.

For example, 82 percent of post-9/11 veterans who separated longer than three years before program entry secured employment within the first post-program year, compared to 79 percent of recently separated veterans and 73 percent of pre-9/11 veterans (Appendix Table F.26). Post-9/11 veterans who separated more than three years before program entry earned an unadjusted average of \$4,864 per quarter after exiting the ES or WIA programs, compared to \$4,271 for recently separated veterans and \$4,219 for pre-9/11 veterans. These differences are likely related, in part, to the more extensive civilian labor market experience of post-9/11 veterans who separated more than three years before program entry.

The small difference between the average post-program quarterly earnings of recently separated veterans and veterans who separated more than three years before program entry (combining post- and pre-9/11 veterans who separated more than three years before program entry) grew after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors and remained large after also adjusting for service receipt in stage 3. After adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors in the second stage of our regression framework, the small and statistically insignificant differential in average post-program quarterly earnings grew from a deficit for recently separated veterans of \$41 to a deficit of \$563 (Figure IV.2 and Appendix Table F.38). Adjusting for service receipt in the third stage did not appreciably affect the differential.

Figure IV.2. Differences in earnings among veterans in Pennsylvania during year after leaving ES or WIA programs, by separation, gender, and service-connected disability status



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Differences by recently separated status compares veterans who had separated in the three years before program entry to those who had been separated for more than three years before program entry.

- Male veterans' greater earnings relative to female veterans persisted after adjusting for characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt.** Female and male veterans secured employment at similar rates but differed in earnings. Sixty-one percent of male veterans secured employment in the first post-program quarter, compared to 62 percent of

female veterans (Appendix Table F.27). However, males earned an unadjusted average of \$4,372 in post-program quarterly earnings, compared to only \$3,594 for females, a difference of \$778 (see Figure IV.2).

The large difference in males' and females' average post-program quarterly earnings persisted after adjustments in stages 2 and 3 (Figure IV.2). The difference decreased by only four percent of the unadjusted mean for males after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors (Appendix Table F.39). Adjusting for service receipt in the third stage did not appreciably affect the earnings differential.

4. **The differences in outcomes depending on the presence of a service-connected disability appeared to be reduced after adjusting for customer characteristics and, to a lesser extent, after adjusting for local area factors and service receipt.** Veterans with service-connected disabilities had lower unadjusted outcomes than veterans without service-connected disabilities. A little over half of veterans with service-connected disabilities secured employment in the first quarter after exit, compared to 62 percent of veterans without service-connected disabilities (Appendix Table F.29). Within the first year after exiting the program, nearly two-thirds of veterans with service-connected disabilities secured employment, compared to 76 percent of veterans without service-connected disabilities. Veterans with service-connected disabilities had average post-program quarterly earnings of \$3,741, compared to \$4,368 for veterans without service-connected disabilities.

Customer characteristics and local area factors appeared to explain more than half of the difference in post-program earnings. After adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors, the differential in average post-program quarterly earnings between veterans with service-connected disabilities and those without them decreased substantially, falling by 9 percent of the unadjusted mean for veterans without service-connected disabilities (Figure IV.2 and Appendix Table F.40). The earnings differential decreased by an additional \$87—3 percent of the unadjusted mean for veterans without service-connected disabilities—after adjusting for service receipt in the third stage, suggesting that veterans with service-connected disabilities were less likely to be receiving a helpful package of services.

V. CHARACTERISTICS, SERVICE RECEIPT, AND OUTCOMES OF VETERANS SERVED IN TEXAS

The unique opportunity provided by the WISPR data collection system allows us to conduct an analysis of Texas parallel to that conducted for Pennsylvania. Using the WISPR system data, we can explore the characteristics, services, and outcomes of veteran customers of the ES and the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in one data set, rather than presenting separate pictures of veteran customers of the ES and the veteran customers of the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

In this chapter, we first provide an overview of veteran employment services in Texas, relying mostly on interviews conducted with state, regional, and local staff. Next, using WISPR data from the fourth quarter of program year 2012, which we restrict to customers who exited between April 1, 2011, and March 31, 2012, we describe the demographic and pre-program characteristics of veterans who exited from the ES and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs during 2011 and 2012. We then describe the services veterans received, as well as their employment and earnings outcomes. We also examine the associations between customer characteristics, local area factors, and the receipt of services and similarly explore relationships between service receipt and outcomes. Throughout, we compare Texas veterans to national data when relevant. Appendix G provides additional tables on the WISPR data analyzed for Texas.

A. Overview of veterans' service provision in Texas

Using the qualitative data collected during site visits to the study local areas, we provide an overview of (1) the organizational structure for veterans' services, (2) veterans' introduction to services, (3) services provided to veterans, (4) service provided to employers on behalf of veterans, and (5) data management for the JVSG.

1. Organizational structure for veterans' services

In 2006, the veterans' program moved from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to the Texas Veterans' Commission (TVC) so that all veterans' services would be consolidated under one agency. Veteran services under TVC were in four program areas: (1) Veterans Employment Services; (2) Veterans Education Program; (3) Claims Representation and Counseling Services; and (4) Fund for Veterans Assistance, which awards reimbursable grants to organizations that support veterans and their families. To promote consistency across the state, TVC drafted state policies and procedures, as well as performance standards for each position and grade for its staff members. As described in Chapter II, this structure was unique among the study states.

Under Veterans Employment Services, five regional managers each oversaw a Texas region and reported to the SVC. Regional managers recruited and hired LVERs and DVOP specialists when the state posted positions in their area. A lead LVER or DVOP specialist helped each regional manager coordinate the LVER and DVOP specialists in their regions, in addition to serving veterans and conducting training. The three Texas local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation were each in a different region. Together, these regions had 66 veterans' representatives assigned to work through their 40 AJCs.

Several people across the hierarchy described the structure as being similar to the military chain of command, with the director being akin to the company commander, the five regions akin to platoons, and the regional managers akin to platoon leaders. Staff at all levels credited this clear structure with aiding communication, minimizing the likelihood of confusion or multiple interpretations, and allowing rapid dissemination and implementation of policies and training.

2. Veterans' identification and introduction to the AJC and its services

Typically, customers visiting an AJC in one of the study local areas for the first time were met by the greeter (usually an ES staff member or a participant in SCSEP). The greeter asked the reason for the visit and whether the customer was a veteran. Anyone who wanted to use the resource room on their own could do so. People who wanted to see a staff member were asked if they were registered in Work in Texas (WIT), the primary MIS that customers used, and were directed to a computer where they could register if they had not already done so. Registration in WIT required responding to questions that would identify and mark the person as a veteran or POS-eligible spouse.

The greeter stations varied somewhat across areas and from center to center. In the Gulf Coast (Texas) local area, one AJC station was equipped with computers, so greeters could pull up the customer's record in WIT and identify the customer's veteran status. These computers also showed which customers were waiting and which staff member they would see, and automatically moved POS eligibles to the top of the queue. Customers waiting to see a staff member were given a device that would vibrate when it was their turn, and they were free to use the resource room until they were called. In the North Central Texas local area, the AJC issued scan cards to customers to track their activity and participation. It was easy to identify new customers, because they did not have a scan card. The greeter registered new customers in the system and issued cards to them.

At the time of the VSS site visits in summer 2013, veteran customers seeking additional services in Texas first met with an available veterans' representative, a DVOP specialist or LVER, to learn about the services available at the center and the veterans' program. The representative assessed these customers to learn their needs and to identify any barriers to employment. The assessment determined whether a customer could be served well by TWC staff or whether he or she needed services from a veterans' representative.

After the initial assessment, not all veterans continued to work with a veterans' representative. State and AJC staff interviewed both felt that having non-JVSG AJC staff serve veterans enabled JVSG staff to focus on those who most needed their services. Most veterans worked with AJC staff and received POS from them. If a veteran simply wanted to continue to use the resource room and was not interested in working with a veterans' representative, a core room staff member helped that veteran. If a veteran was interested in training and was a good fit for WIA, that veteran was referred to the WIA counselor.

Other veterans would work with a veterans' representative. If veterans were not job ready and had a barrier to employment, they might receive intensive services from a DVOP specialist if they qualified. If a veteran was job ready but had a barrier affecting his or her ability to find

employment, he or she might work with an LVER to receive help on looking for work and on job placement.

3. Services provided to veterans

Many AJCs had both DVOP specialists and LVERs. In Texas, LVERs had roles similar to those described in Chapter III. They focused on employer outreach, individualized job developments, and recently separated veterans (defined as having served in the military in the past three years). DVOP specialists focused on case management for disabled veterans, those who were homeless, and those who were economically or educationally disadvantaged. Some smaller offices in less populated areas had only a DVOP specialist or an LVER, and that person covered some of the tasks generally done by the other as the need arose. Those customers who entered into intensive services with a veteran's representative had an Employment Development Plan created that incorporated information on service-connected disabilities, housing, transportation, barriers, interests, and goals.

Veterans' representatives described several veteran services, which were similar to those described in Chapter III. One key service was making referrals to other programs. Veterans' representatives made referrals to programs for homeless veterans and programs that provided transportation assistance, repaid debts, and provided food and child care assistance. Another responsibility was alerting veterans to new job listings, which were on a 48-hour veteran job hold in WIT. The DVOP specialist sent notices to veteran customers of new job order postings that appeared suitable for them. In addition, according to veterans in one local area, the veterans' representative they were working with regularly contacted them, often once or twice a week, to (for example) follow up on tasks the veterans were supposed to complete or ask about results of job applications.

In addition to JVSG, the TWC initiated a temporary resource and referral network—the Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP)—which was unique among the study states. Begun in 2008, the TVLP connected returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with resources to help address their employment, training, medical, educational, and other needs. The 22 TVLP staff members were located in AJCs and were all veterans of the wars in Iraq and/or Afghanistan themselves. They were able to coordinate hands-on services, such as transporting customers from home to appointments, and work with people with intensive needs, such as severe mental health or medical issues. Services were tailored to fit customer needs and the programs for which they qualified, so someone eligible for post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and just starting their career might take a different path than someone who served 20 years, then worked for 10 years, and might need retraining in a different field. The TVLP was able to serve veterans who were not in a position to seek employment as well as those who were. TVLP and TVC staff regularly made referrals of customers to each other when appropriate, and customers could be served by both programs concurrently. The groups also shared information on veteran-friendly employers.

4. Services provided to employers on behalf of veterans

In Texas, as across the study local areas, LVERs conducted both general and targeted outreach to employers. LVERs in all three study local areas in Texas reported providing job placement assistance to individual veteran customers. They also reported a state-led effort to assess veteran job seekers' skill sets and to identify and target industries that might have job

positions matching those skill sets. This reflected a shift from trying to get as many employers as possible to list openings to figuring out what skills their veterans had, what kinds of positions they were seeking, and then targeting employers who fit those needs and were paying at least \$10 an hour. LVERs and other AJC business services staff reported that they shared information on the firms they were targeting so they did not overlap excessively. If business services staff did not have success with a particular employer, an LVER would sometimes try taking a veteran-oriented approach to see if that would work.

In addition to the LVERs assigned to local areas, four of the five regions had a Veterans' Business Representative (VBR) who developed and coordinated regional-level contacts with large businesses. These were LVERs elevated to a regional position to work directly with human resources managers at large firms that wanted to hire many people or hire over a large area. All VBRs came from recruiting backgrounds, and they did not have direct customer service or supervisory roles. They determined the firms' needs and worked with LVERs and staff who then identified appropriate veterans and pre-screened them. The VBR again screened these veterans' resumes to ensure an appropriate match. According to staff, the dual screening helped ensure that the employers would be satisfied with the applicants and would continue working with TVC.

5. Data management

Texas used three computer systems for different tasks in support of AJC customers in general and veterans specifically:

1. **Work in Texas.** WIT had a public side for job search, self-registration, and other job seeker and employer uses, and an internal side for staff entry of services, case notes, and job matching. Employers could choose to make a veteran-only listing that never became open to the general population or one that becomes visible to all after a certain time. Veteran job seeker profiles were flagged with an American flag icon to identify the job seeker as a veteran; employers could use this flag to search for potential veteran employees in the job matching system. Assigned flags in WIT helped staff identify customers as veterans, service-connected disabled, POS eligibles, and UCX recipients.
2. **The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST).** TWIST was a single database with integrated reporting for more than 30 separate state agencies that provide employment and welfare services. The TWIST application had five major functional sections: (1) intake, (2) eligibility determination, (3) assessment, (4) service tracking, and (5) reporting.
3. **Veterans Employment Case Management System (VCMS).** The VCMS was a stand-alone TVC system, which went into more depth regarding veterans than did TWIST. DVOP specialists and LVERs went through screen by screen with JVSG-eligible veterans to develop an IEP that included short- and long-term goals, approaches to meeting them, and steps to take. Cases in it were color coded by how long it had been since the veteran was last contacted so staff knew when a case was expiring and that they should contact the veteran. DD-214s from the Federal Claims Control Center were scanned into this system.

Staff from different workforce programs in Texas used different systems to track services provided to veteran customers. Although TVC staff could access multiple systems, access to the VCMS was limited to TVC staff. TVC staff developed employment plans in VCMS and tracked the services they provided in WIT. The contents of WIT were automatically imported to TWIST and reported in WISPR. TVC staff could see services provided by TWC staff in WIT, allowing them to verify that the veteran was being properly served. In addition, this prevented the need for both types of staff to enter an individual into case management.

B. Veterans' characteristics

In Texas, more than 94,000 of the 985,000 total customers (nearly 10 percent) exiting from the ES and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs during 2011–2012 were veteran customers.²⁶ Nationally, 11 percent of all ES customers were veterans and 7 percent of all WIA customers were veterans, using LERS and WIASRD data sets from the same time period. Nearly all of the 94,000 Texas veteran customers had participated in the ES program, and less than 2 percent were enrolled in the WIA programs (1 percent in the Adult program and less than 1 percent in the Dislocated Worker program).²⁷

To better understand the composition of veteran customers of the ES and WIA programs, in the following section, we describe the characteristics of these veteran customers exiting from the ES and/or WIA programs. We first compare veterans and nonveterans, highlighting differences with national data when relevant. We then compare the characteristics of veterans in four subgroups, selected based on their policy relevance: (1) JVSG status, (2) time since separation, (3) gender, and (4) service-connected disability.

Texas veteran customers were more likely than nonveteran customers to be older, male, and non-Hispanic white. For example, more than one-quarter of veteran customers were age 55 or older, compared to 11 percent of nonveteran customers (Table V.1). Slightly less than half of veterans were non-Hispanic white compared to 29 percent of nonveterans. However, Texas veteran customers were more likely than veteran customers nationally to be Hispanic (23 and 9 percent, respectively) (Appendix Table D.2). (See Appendix D for more data on national comparisons.)

About one in five Texas veteran customers had recently separated from the military. In addition, 37 percent served on or after September 11, 2001 and 57 percent were campaign veterans (that is, were on active duty during combat) (see Table V.1).²⁸

²⁶ Because customers who receive only self-services are excluded from WIA performance measures, we excluded them from most of our analyses. See Appendix Table G.1 for a comparison of characteristics of veterans who only received self-services to those who received more than self-services.

²⁷ Authors' additional calculations not shown in any tables.

²⁸ See Appendix B for the definitions of post-9/11 veterans, recently separated veterans, and campaign veterans, as well as definitions of the other variables used in our analysis.

Table V.1. Characteristics of Texas ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Characteristic	Veterans	Nonveterans
Demographic characteristics		
Gender		
Male	87.2**	51.6
Female	12.8**	48.4
Age		
18–24	7.2**	19.7
25–34	21.6**	27.4
35–44	20.9**	22.1
45–54	24.0**	19.7
55–64	19.9**	9.4
65 or older	6.3**	1.8
Race/ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	47.0**	28.7
African American, non-Hispanic	23.7	25.8
Hispanic	22.8**	39.1
Other	6.5	6.4
Had a disability	14.1**	1.4
Education level		
Below high school	2.1**	20.4
High school diploma or GED	39.7**	45.6
Some college	46.4**	26.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.9**	7.1
Service-related characteristics		
Recently separated veteran	19.4	n.a.
Post-9/11 veteran	36.8	n.a.
Campaign veteran	56.5	n.a.
Service-connected disability	10.8	n.a.
Pre-program characteristics		
Average pre-program quarterly earnings		
None	21.2	20.8
\$1 to \$2,499	16.6**	25.8
\$2,500 to \$4,999	14.5**	19.9
\$5,000 to \$7,499	12.8*	13.6
\$7,500 to \$9,999	10.4**	8.4
\$10,000 to \$19,999	20.2**	9.6
\$20,000 or more	4.5**	2.0
Employment status at participation		
Employed	19.5**	14.7
Employed, but received notice of termination	2.8**	1.8
Not employed	77.7**	83.5
Unemployment insurance claimant status		
Claimant, referred by WPRS	22.0**	26.5
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	33.8**	27.3
Exhaustee	3.5**	2.3
Not a claimant	40.7*	43.9
Sample size	94,108	891,152

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted chi-squared tests to assess differences across columns in the distributions in variables with more than two categories—age (categorical), race/ethnicity, education level, average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment status at participation, and unemployment insurance claimant status—and only performed t-tests to detect differences between individual categories when the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$).

CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development test; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Veteran subgroups. We compared Texas veterans within the four subgroups of interest:

1. **Thirteen percent of Texas JVSG veterans had a service-connected disability, compared to 7 percent of Texas non-JVSG veterans (Table V.2).** Because veterans' representatives typically work with a more disadvantaged veteran population, this was expected. In addition, a higher percentage of JVSG veterans than non-JVSG veterans were campaign veterans (59 and 53 percent, respectively), and a slightly lower percentage of JVSG veterans than non-JVSG veterans were non-Hispanic white (45 and 50 percent, respectively).
2. **Recently separated veterans were more likely to be young, have lower educational attainment, and be campaign veterans than veterans who had been out of the military for more than three years.** For example, half of recently separated veterans had a high school degree or less, compared to 36 percent of post-9/11 veterans who were not recently separated, and 41 percent of pre-9/11 veterans (Table V.2). It is possible that, because recently separated veterans tended to be younger, they had not finished their schooling. Indeed, younger veterans were less likely than older veterans to have at least some college schooling (Appendix Table G.8). In contrast, recently separated veterans were less likely to be employed at program entry than post-9/11 veterans who were not recently separated.
3. **Female veteran customers tended to be younger, have more schooling, and were more likely to be non-Hispanic African American than male veteran customers.** Forty-four percent of female veteran customers were between ages 18 and 34, compared to just less than 27 percent of male veteran customers (Table V.3). This most likely reflects the growing presence of females in the military (evident in Table V.2, which shows that 18 percent of recently separated veterans were females, compared to 9 percent of pre-9/11 veterans). Seventy-two percent of female veterans had received at least college schooling and one-third were non-Hispanic African American.
4. **Veterans with service-connected disabilities were more likely to be campaign veterans, post-9/11 veterans, and to not have filed for UI than veterans without service-connected disabilities.** For example, 74 percent of veterans with service-connected disabilities were campaign veterans, compared to 54 percent of veterans without them (Table V.3). This result is parallel to the relationship between JVSG veterans and campaign veterans mentioned earlier. Forty-nine percent of veterans with service-connected disabilities were post-9/11 veterans and 46 percent had not filed for UI, compared to 35 percent and 40 percent, respectively, of veterans without service-connected disabilities.

Table V.2. Characteristics of Texas veteran ES and WIA program customers, by JVSG and separation status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Characteristic	JVSG status		Separation status		
	JVSG	Non-JVSG	Recently separated	Post-9/11, but not recently separated	Pre-9/11
Demographic characteristics					
Gender					
Male	87.2	87.3	82.0**	80.5**	90.7
Female	12.8	12.7	18.0**	19.5**	9.3
Age					
18–24	7.2	7.4	33.4**	4.1**	0.0
25–34	21.3	22.2	42.9**	62.7**	3.8
35–44	20.8	21.1	15.9*	19.3**	22.9
45–54	24.9**	22.6	6.6**	11.5**	32.7
55–64	19.9	19.8	1.1**	2.2**	30.6
65 or older	6.0**	6.9	<0.1**	0.1**	10.0
Race/ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	44.6	50.4	42.0**	38.5**	50.8
African American, non-Hispanic	24.5	22.6	20.6**	27.1*	23.8
Hispanic	24.4	20.6	29.6*	27.4**	19.5
Other	6.5	6.4	7.8	7.0**	5.9
Had a disability	16.9**	10.0	14.8**	20.3**	12.2
Education level					
Below high school	1.6**	2.6	0.5	0.5**	3.0
High school diploma or GED	38.1**	42.0	50.0**	35.7	37.6
Some college	47.6**	44.6	41.6**	50.9**	46.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	12.7**	10.7	7.9**	12.9	12.9
Service-related characteristics					
Recently separated veteran	21.0**	17.3	100.0	0.0	0.0
Post-9/11 veteran	37.8**	35.3	100.0	100.0**	0.0
Campaign veteran	59.0**	52.9	85.5**	72.9**	43.1
Service-connected disability	13.4**	7.1	12.7**	16.5**	8.7
Pre-program characteristics					
Average pre-program quarterly earnings					
None	22.0	19.9	14.0**	19.6**	23.8
\$1 to \$2,499	16.5	16.7	14.9**	20.7**	16.0
\$2,500 to \$4,999	14.2	14.8	14.1**	16.1*	14.1
\$5,000 to \$7,499	12.7	12.8	11.2**	14.0**	12.9
\$7,500 to \$9,999	10.1	10.8	9.5**	10.9	10.5
\$10,000 to \$19,999	20.2	20.1	33.2**	15.3*	17.5
\$20,000 or more	4.3	4.8	3.0	3.4**	5.3
Employment status at participation					
Employed	19.6	19.3	14.9**	25.0**	19.4
Employed, but received notice of termination	3.0	2.5	5.2**	2.1	2.2
Not employed	77.4	78.2	79.8**	72.9**	78.4
Unemployment insurance claimant status					
Claimant, referred by WPRS	20.4	24.3	20.7**	16.9**	23.8
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	33.1	34.8	40.9**	29.5**	32.8
Exhaustee	3.9	3.0	1.9**	2.6**	4.2
Not a claimant	42.7	37.9	36.5**	51.0**	39.2
Sample size	55,516	38,592	18,299	16,314	59,495

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted chi-squared tests to assess differences across columns in the distributions in variables with more than two categories—age (categorical), race/ethnicity, education level, average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment status at participation, and unemployment insurance claimant status—and only performed t-tests to detect differences between individual categories

when the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$). The asterisks indicate significant differences between the current and subsequent column (for example, the percentage male reported in the “Post-9/11, but not recently separated” column has an asterisk if it is significantly different from the percentage male in the “Pre-9/11” column).

CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Table V.3. Characteristics of Texas veteran ES and WIA program customers, by gender and service-connected disability status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters; percentages)

Characteristic	Gender		Disability status	
	Male	Female	Service-connected disability	No service-connected disability
Demographic characteristics				
Gender				
Male	100.0**	0.0	83.7**	87.7
Female	0.0**	100.0	16.3**	12.3
Age				
18–24	6.7**	10.7	4.2**	7.6
25–34	20.0**	32.8	23.8	21.4
35–44	20.3**	25.1	24.0**	20.6
45–54	24.3**	21.4	24.6	23.9
55–64	21.5**	9.1	18.9	20.0
65 or older	7.1**	0.9	4.4**	6.6
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	48.2**	38.4	44.5	47.3
African American, non-Hispanic	22.4**	32.6	24.9	23.6
Hispanic	23.2*	20.2	23.6	22.7
Other	6.1**	8.8	7.0	6.4
Had a disability	13.6**	17.4	99.7**	3.7
Education level				
Below high school	2.3**	0.4	0.8**	2.2
High school diploma or GED	41.5**	27.2	26.4**	41.3
Some college	45.0**	55.7	54.0**	45.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.2**	16.6	18.9**	11.1
Service-related characteristics				
Recently separated veteran	18.3**	27.4	22.8**	19.0
Post-9/11 veteran	34.3**	53.8	49.2**	35.3
Campaign veteran	56.9**	53.5	73.9**	54.4
Service-connected disability	10.4**	13.8	100.0	0.0
Pre-program characteristics				
Average pre-program quarterly earnings				
None	21.2	20.6	24.2**	20.8
\$1 to \$2,499	16.2**	19.0	13.6**	16.9
\$2,500 to \$4,999	14.3**	15.6	11.9**	14.8
\$5,000 to \$7,499	12.6*	13.7	11.2**	12.9
\$7,500 to \$9,999	10.5	10.0	10.3	10.4
\$10,000 to \$19,999	20.3	18.8	23.3**	19.8
\$20,000 or more	4.8**	2.3	5.6**	4.4
Employment status at participation				
Employed	19.0**	22.5	19.8	19.4
Employed, but received notice of termination	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.8
Not employed	78.2**	74.5	77.2	77.8

Characteristic	Gender		Disability status	
	Male	Female	Service-connected disability	No service-connected disability
Unemployment insurance claimant status				
Claimant, referred by WPRS	21.9	22.8	17.2**	22.6
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	34.4**	29.5	34.4	33.7
Exhaustee	3.5*	3.1	2.4**	3.6
Not a claimant	40.1**	44.6	45.9**	40.1
Sample size	82,096	12,012	10,178	83,930

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. We conducted chi-squared tests to assess differences across columns in the distributions in variables with more than two categories—age (categorical), race/ethnicity, education level, average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment status at participation, and unemployment insurance claimant status—and only performed t-tests to detect differences between individual categories when the chi-squared test was statistically different ($p \leq 0.01$). The asterisks indicate significant differences between the current and subsequent column (for example, the percentage with a disability reported in the “High school diploma or GED” column has an asterisk if it is significantly different from the percentage with a disability in the “Some college” column).

CY = calendar year; GED = general educational development; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

C. Descriptive and correlational analyses of veterans’ service receipt and outcomes

Describing the characteristics of veterans only presents a picture of veterans before they entered an AJC. In this section, we move deeper into our analysis by exploring Texas veterans’ service receipt and labor market outcomes to capture their experiences as AJC customers in the ES and WIA programs and after they exit. As in Chapter IV, we first report on the services received by veterans and then compare their service receipt to nonveteran customers and between the four veteran subgroups. For each of the subgroups, except for the JVSG status subgroup, we also assess the service receipt differential between subgroups of veterans after adjusting for demographic and pre-program characteristics and local area factors. Next, we present similar analyses of veterans’ outcomes, first presenting associations between veterans’ earnings and service receipt, then comparing veterans’ and nonveterans’ outcomes, and finally comparing outcomes within veteran subgroups. We also explore relationships between post-program outcomes, demographic and pre-program characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt.

1. Service receipt

We present our analyses of service receipt by examining all Texas veterans, comparing veteran and nonveteran customers, and then examining differences in the veteran subgroups.

Almost 60 percent of Texas veterans received at least one service from a DVOP specialist or LVER, but fewer received intensive services and training. Forty-one and 28 percent of Texas veterans received staff-assisted core services from DVOP specialists and LVERs, respectively (Table V.4). About 42 percent of veterans received intensive services; 21 percent received these services from a DVOP specialist and 14 percent from an LVER. Only 1 percent of veterans received WIA training. During the same period, less than 2 percent of nonveterans received WIA-funded training.

Table V.4. Service and training receipt of Texas veteran ES and WIA program customers (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)

Service receipt	Percentage
Received any service from DVOP specialist or LVER	59.0
Staff-assisted core services	
Received staff-assisted core services	100.0
Received staff-assisted core services provided by DVOP specialist	40.8
Received staff-assisted core services provided by LVER	27.8
Intensive services	
Received intensive services	41.5
Received intensive provided by DVOP specialist	21.1
Received intensive provided by LVER	14.0
Training services	
Received training	1.3
Focus of occupational skills training	
Managerial, administrative, professional, and technical	41.1
Service	5.6
Sales, clerical, and administrative support	5.4
Agricultural, natural resources, and construction	4.5
Mechanical and transportation	42.9
Not reported	0.5
Sample size	94,108

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

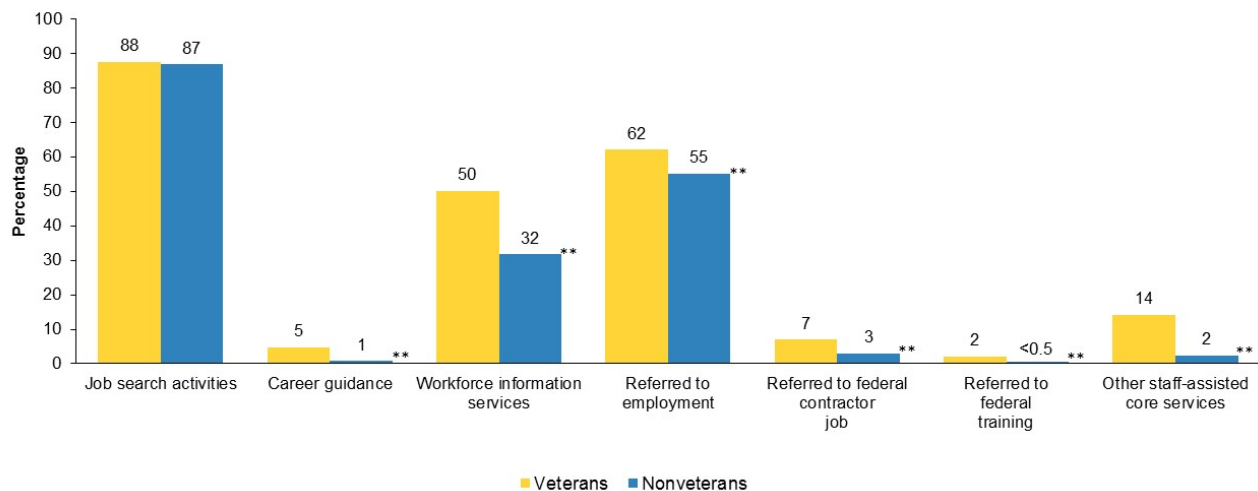
Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms.

CY = calendar year; DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative.

Texas veterans' receipt of services was positively correlated with pre-program employment, average pre-program quarterly earnings, being African American, and UI receipt. A regression of veterans' service receipt on customer demographic and pre-program characteristics and local area factors found that pre-program employment, pre-program quarterly earnings, and being African American were correlated with job search activities and workforce information services, two of the three most common activities. UI receipt and being African American were highly correlated with referral to employment, another one of the most common activities. For example, veteran customers employed at the time of program entry were 6 percent less likely to receive job search activity services and 5 percent less likely to receive workforce information services, holding all else constant (Appendix Table G.41.A). Higher pre-program average quarterly earnings were correlated with a higher probability of receiving workforce information services and a lower probability of receiving referrals to employment. For example, veteran customers who had pre-program earnings between \$10,000 and \$19,999 were 11 percent less likely to receive referrals to employment.

According to the Texas WISPR data, veteran customers exiting the ES and WIA programs during 2011–2012 tended to receive more services through the workforce system than did nonveterans. The staff-assisted core services most often received by customers, regardless of veteran status, were job search activities, workforce information services, and referrals to employment (Figure V.1). However, veteran customers received workforce information services and referrals to employment at significantly higher rates than nonveterans; for example, 50 percent of veterans received workforce information services compared to 32 percent of nonveterans. Veterans received intensive services at more than twice the rate of nonveterans (42 and 19 percent, respectively) (Appendix Table G.13). This difference appears to be related to veterans’ representative-provided services, because only 16 percent of non-JVSG veterans received intensive services, compared to 59 percent of JVSG veterans (see discussion below). Compared to veterans nationally, Texas veterans received some services at higher rates, including job search activities and referrals to employment (see Appendix D).

Figure V.1. Comparison of staff-assisted core services receipt of Texas ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Very few customers were referred to federal jobs or placed in federal training, No customers were placed in federal jobs or federal contractor jobs.

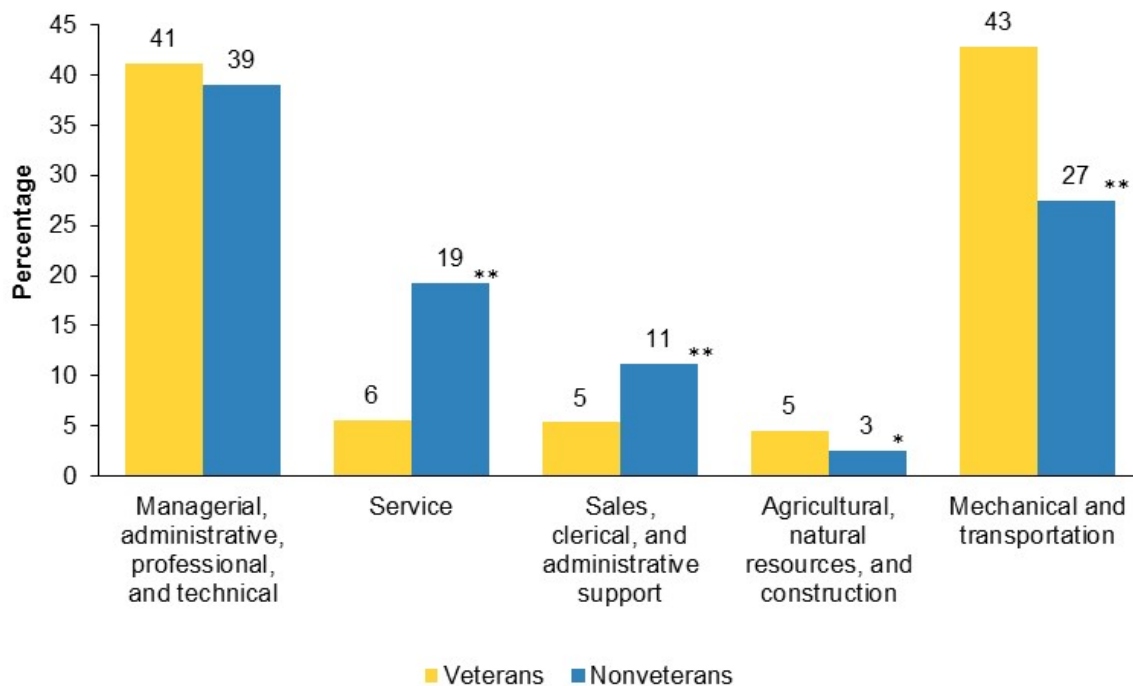
**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

The training focus of the veterans and nonveterans who received training services differed. Overall, few veterans and nonveterans received WIA-funded training services: 1.3 percent of veterans and 1.6 percent of nonveterans received training services (Appendix Table G.13).²⁹ Of veterans receiving WIA-funded training, nearly 43 percent received training in skills related to mechanical and transportation occupations, compared to only 27 percent of nonveterans

²⁹ Among veteran customers who received training, 44 percent received funding through the WIA Dislocated Worker Program, 27 percent received funding through the WIA Adult Program, 16 percent received funding through the TAA, and 7 percent received funding through NEGs, counting customers who were co-enrolled in multiple programs more than once. An important issue to note with these numbers, though, is that 32 percent of veteran customers reported to have received training services were reported as only receiving funding through the ES, which does not fund training.

(Figure V.2). Because WIA counselors deem training candidates as likely to successfully complete training, this suggests that veterans, more so than nonveterans, enter WIA programs already possessing some skills in these areas.

Figure V.2. Comparison of focus of occupational skills training of Texas ES and WIA program customers, by veteran status (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

Veteran subgroups. As described above, we examined receipt of services for four veteran subgroups and, for all subgroups except for JVSG status, we assessed whether any differences in service receipt are associated with observed customer characteristics and local areas factors:

1. **Texas JVSG veterans were, on average, more likely than Texas non-JVSG veterans to receive most services.** For example, 73 percent of JVSG veterans accessed self-assisted services compared to 60 percent of non-JVSG veterans who received these services (Appendix Table G.14). Moreover, JVSG veterans received workforce information services at twice the rate of non-JVSG veterans, and more than two-thirds received referrals to employment, compared to one half of non-JVSG veterans. JVSG veterans received intensive services at almost four times the rate of non-JVSG veterans (59 percent of JVSG veterans received intensive services, compared to 16 percent of non-JVSG veterans).

2. **Recently separated veterans were slightly more likely to receive services than veterans who had separated less recently.** For example, 55 percent of recently separated veterans received workforce information services, compared to 49 percent of veterans who had not recently separated (Appendix Table G.15).

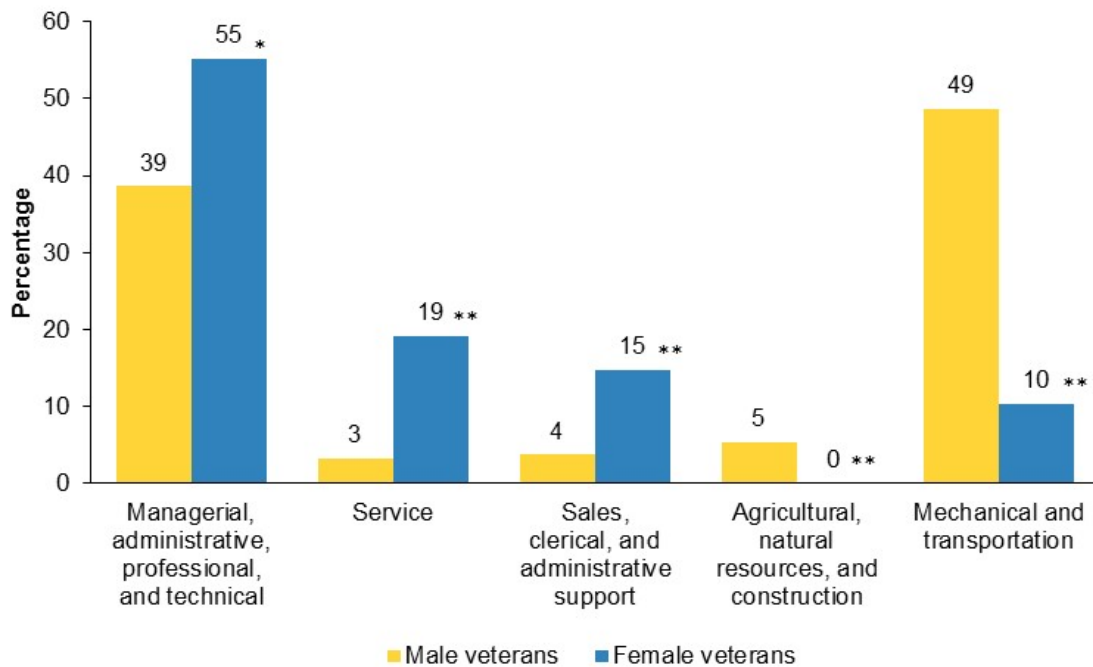
Many service receipt differentials between recently separated veterans and those who separated less recently (combining post-9/11 and pre-9/11 veterans who separated longer than three years before program entry) increased in magnitude after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors (Appendix Table G.35). The increase in differences implies that differences in customer characteristics and local area practices between the two groups cannot explain these service differentials.

3. **Female and male veterans showed similar patterns of service receipt but differed in the focus of their occupational skills training.** Female veteran customers received self-assisted services, staff-assisted core services, and intensive and training services at rates similar to those of male veterans, even though they differed in age, education, and ethnicity (see previous section) (Appendix Table G.16). Adjusting for the demographic and pre-program characteristics listed in Appendix Table G.41.A and local area factors in stage 2 did not otherwise affect these results.

The type of skills training female veterans received differed from that of male veterans. Among veteran customers receiving WIA-funded training, 55 percent of females, compared to 39 percent of males, received training in skills related to managerial, administrative, professional, and technical occupations (Figure V.3 and Appendix Table G.16). It may be the case that female veterans received training of this type more often because they had higher levels of education than male veterans or that they had prior experience in these fields.

4. **Texas veterans with a service-connected disability received more services than their counterparts, even though differences narrowed after adjusting for pre-program characteristics and local area factors.** Veterans with service-connected disabilities were more likely than veterans without service-connected disabilities to receive multiple services, including core and intensive services, from veterans' representatives (Appendix Table G.18). The higher propensities of these veterans to receive these services were tempered after adjusting for veteran characteristics and local area factors, suggesting that these differences are explained, at least in part, by pre-program characteristics—such as employment at time of program participation and age—and local area factors (Appendix Table G.37).

Figure V.3. Comparison of focus of occupational skills training of Texas ES and WIA program customers, by gender (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

**/*Statistically significant difference between groups at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

2. Post-program employment outcomes

In this subsection, we explore the post-program employment and earnings outcomes of Texas veterans, nonveterans, and the four veteran subgroups. We then analyze the effects of adjusting earnings outcomes for customer characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt in a staged regression framework for the same subgroups, except JVSG veterans.

Any findings from these analyses are only suggestive in nature. Although we statistically control for variables available in the WISPR data set, there may be characteristics of the customers for which we do not have data that are associated with both service receipt and employment outcomes. Not controlling for these characteristics may lead to a spurious correlation between service receipt and outcomes. However, the analyses presented can suggest relations that exist among service receipt, customer characteristics, and local area factors, and between labor market outcomes and service receipt; and lead to areas to explore in further research.

Texas veterans' average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment at the time of program entry, and recently separated veteran status were all highly positively correlated with post-program earnings. In a regression of veterans' average post-program quarterly earnings on customer demographic and pre-program characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt, we found that average pre-program quarterly earnings, employment at the time of program entry, and recently separated veteran status were all highly correlated with post-program earnings. The higher a customer's pre-program earnings, the higher was his or her post-

program earnings, holding all else constant. For example, veterans with pre-program earnings between \$2,500 and \$4,999 and between \$10,000 and \$19,999 had post-program earnings that were \$944 and \$4,944 more than customers whose pre-program quarterly earnings were between \$1 and \$2,499, holding all else constant (Table V.5).

Veterans' receipt of WIA-funded training, referral to employment, and referral to federal contractor jobs were positively correlated with post-program earnings. Receipt of WIA-funded training was associated with average post-program quarterly earnings that were, on average, \$2,350 higher than earnings of veterans who did not receive training (Table V.5). Similarly, veterans who received referrals to employment and veterans who received referrals to federal contractor jobs had earnings that were, on average, \$411 and \$261, respectively, higher than earnings of veterans who did not receive these services. It may be that each of these services improved job market prospects of veteran customers. However, it is possible that veterans who received these services had unobservable characteristics that were associated with higher earnings, thus leading to spurious correlations of these services and earnings. Regardless, it is important to keep in mind the percentages of veterans that received these services. Only 1 percent of veteran customers received training and 7 percent received referrals to federal contractor jobs (Table V.4 and Figure V.1). In contrast, almost two in three Texas veteran customers received referrals to employment.

Veterans' receipt of supportive services (including needs-related payments), receipt of job search assistance, and receipt of intensive services were negatively correlated with post-program earnings. Veteran customers who received supportive services had average post-program quarterly earnings that were \$881 less than veterans who did not receive these services (Table V.5). Supportive services include such services as assistance with transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing that are necessary to enable the customer to participate in WIA programs and needs-related payments are payments based on need to enable the customer's participation. Veterans who received job search assistance and veterans who received intensive services had earnings that were \$462 and \$341, respectively, lower than earnings of veterans who did not receive these services. The same barriers that made additional and more intensive services appropriate also likely make it more difficult for these veterans to obtain higher wage jobs.

Texas veterans who received at least one staff-assisted or intensive service from a DVOP specialist or LVER had higher earnings than those who did not. Veterans who received at least one staff-assisted service from a DVOP specialist or LVER had earnings that were, on average, \$197 higher than veterans who did not (Table V.5). Veterans who received at least one intensive service from a DVOP specialist or LVER had earnings that were, on average, \$86 higher than veterans who did not. However, neither of these findings was statistically significant.

Table V.5. Associations between earnings and selected customer characteristics and service receipt among Texas veteran ES and WIA program customers (CY 2011–2012 program exiters)

Variable	Dollars
Selected customer characteristics	
Recently separated veteran status	-1,208.31**
Average pre-program quarterly earnings (ref: \$1 to \$2,499)	
None	-501.99**
\$2,500 to \$4,999	943.93**
\$5,000 to \$7,499	1,992.81**
\$7,500 to \$9,999	3,175.57**
\$10,000 to \$19,999	4,943.56**
\$20,000 or more	11,391.82**
Employment status at participation (ref.: not employed)	
Employed	2,024.31**
Employed, but received notice of termination	1,008.21**
Unemployment insurance claimant status (ref.: not a claimant)	
Claimant, referred by WPRS	-1,122.71**
Claimant, not referred by WPRS	-610.92**
Exhaustee	16.64
Service receipt	
Self-services	225.44**
Staff-assisted core services	
Job search activities	-461.96**
Career guidance	-261.27*
Workforce information services	-178.10**
Referred to employment	410.78**
Referred to federal job	-313.45
Referred to federal contractor job	261.27**
Referred to federal training	-249.67
Placed in federal training	-550.95
Received other staff-assisted core services	70.37
Staff-assisted core service provided by DVOP specialist or LVER	197.41
Intensive services	
Received intensive services	-341.10**
Intensive services provided by DVOP specialist or LVER	86.13
Received WIA training	2,350.08**
Other services	
Pre-vocational activities	-266.63
Received supportive services (including needs-related payments)	-880.53**
Sample size	94,108

Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: See the appendices for additional information about the sample and definitions of terms. Estimates are based on linear regression models in which the dependent variable is average post-program quarterly earnings and the explanatory variables are the customer characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt. Regression accounts for clustering at the local area level. See Appendix Table G.42.A for regression coefficients of all explanatory variables included in regression, their standard errors, and additional regression information.

CY = calendar year. DVOP = Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; LVER = Local Veterans' Employment Representative; WPRS = Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system.

**/*Statistically significant difference from zero at the .01/.05 level, two-tailed test.

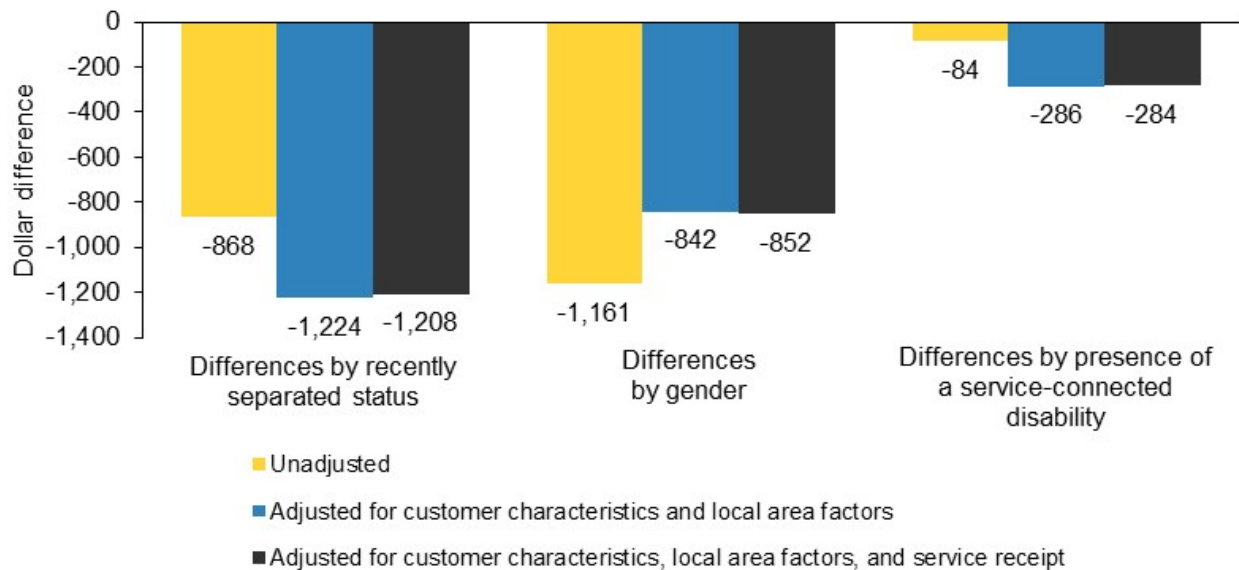
Veterans and nonveterans in Texas fared similarly in employment attainment after leaving the ES or WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs over a 12-month period, but veterans had higher earnings. For example, 60 percent of veterans were employed in the first quarter after exiting, compared to 62 percent of nonveterans (Appendix Table G.24). However, average post-program quarterly earnings during the first post-program year among veterans and nonveteran customers were \$5,067 and \$3,910, respectively. Nationally, veterans exiting from the ES had slightly higher average earnings than nonveterans, but both earned less than in Texas. Nationally, veterans earned an average of \$3,848, compared to \$3,555 for nonveterans (Appendix Table D.27).

Veteran subgroups. We analyzed outcomes for the four veteran subgroups. As described in Chapter IV.C, the staged-analysis conducted for three of the subgroups suggests associations between the outcomes and veterans' characteristics, local area factors, and service receipt.

1. **Texas JVSG and non-JVSG veterans' employment and earnings outcomes were similar.** JVSG veterans were slightly more likely to be employed in the first quarter after exiting the program, within one year after exiting, and in all four quarters after exiting (Appendix Table G.25). Average post-program quarterly earnings over a one-year period among JVSG veterans was \$5,043, compared to \$5,102 for veteran customers who did not receive any services from a DVOP specialist or LVER staff.
2. **Recently separated veterans had worse outcomes than veterans who had separated less recently.** Sixty-eight percent of veterans who had separated after 9/11 but more than three years before entering ES and WIA programs secured employment in the first quarter after program exit, compared to 57 percent of recently separated veterans (Appendix Table G.26). Moreover, veterans who separated from military service after 9/11 but more than three years before program entry earned an average of \$5,536 in quarterly earnings in the first year after program exit, compared to \$4,368 for recently separated veterans.

Differences in earnings between recently separated veterans and those who separated from military less recently (combining post- and pre-911 veterans who separated more than three years before program entry) grew after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors, but not after adjusting for service receipt. Before making any adjustments, the average quarterly earnings of veterans who separated within three years of program entry was \$868 less than those who separated more than three years before program entry (Figure V.4 and Appendix Table G.38). This difference grew to \$1,224 after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors. The difference stayed relatively constant after adjusting for service receipt, even though the two groups of veterans received services at different rates.

Figure V.4. Differences in earnings among veterans in Texas during year after leaving ES or WIA programs, by separation, gender, and service-connected disability status



Source: WISPR data for program year 2012, quarter 4.

Note: Differences by recently separated status compares veterans who had separated in the three years before program entry to those who had been separated for more than three years before program entry.

- Male veterans' greater earnings relative to female veterans narrowed after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors and did not change after adjusting for service receipt.** The unadjusted post-program quarterly earnings differential between female and male veterans was substantial (\$1,161) (Figure V.4 and Appendix Table G.39). However, the earnings differential decreased by 27 percent after adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors. It did not change after adjusting for service receipt.
- Receipt of services did not explain the differences between the outcomes of veterans with service-connected disabilities and those without them.** After adjusting for customer characteristics and local area factors, the previously small and statistically insignificant difference in average post-program quarterly earnings between veterans with and without service-connected disabilities stayed negative, increasing from two to six percent of the unadjusted average for those without a service-connected disability and becoming statistically significant (Figure V.4 and Appendix Table G.40). It changed little after adjusting for receipt of services in the third stage, suggesting that differences in service receipt between veterans with and without service-connected disabilities were small. This analysis suggests that any differences are not associated with service receipt.

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VI. CONCLUSION

With thousands of military personnel returning home from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the public workforce system must be prepared to help them, and the veterans already in the system, find employment in the civilian labor market. In fiscal year 2011, about 1.5 million veterans were enrolled in the ES program, about 90,000 in the WIA Adult program, and about 60,000 in the WIA Dislocated Workers program (Veterans' Employment and Training Service n.d.). According to the 2011 American Community Survey, 21.5 million total veterans reside in the U.S. (U.S. Census 2015).

Although the delivery of services to veterans is guided mainly by federal policy, approaches to veterans' service delivery varied across the 19 states and 28 randomly selected local areas participating in the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation. This chapter identifies common challenges associated with serving veteran customers through the public workforce system; it also describes innovative strategies that emerged through unique state and local approaches to service delivery. To further explore these issues, the chapter includes insights from the analyses of the WISPR administrative data for Pennsylvania and Texas. The chapter concludes by looking ahead to the implications of the study's findings for changes that came in 2014—federal guidance for the JVSG program and the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which replaced WIA.

A. Common challenges

Across the states and local area staff interviewed, five challenges to providing employment services focused on veterans emerged:

1. **Resource constraints and demand for services did not align with providing services through the statutory roles of LVERs and DVOP specialists.** At the time of the site visits in summer 2013, DVOP specialists and LVERs had different roles in serving veteran customers and employers. However, due to staffing constraints, veterans' representatives might serve multiple AJCs or both positions might not be filled in a given local area. It could also be that demand for the services of one of the positions outpaces the other, leading to one person being overworked and the other being underutilized. In these cases, respondents felt that veterans' representatives should provide all services, regardless of their statutory roles.
2. **At their initial visit, veterans were typically unaware of POS and other services available to veterans.** AJC staff from across the study's local areas reported that many new veteran customers were not aware of POS and the special services available to them through the AJCs. Veterans participating in focus groups confirmed this.
3. **Reduced staffing for some AJC partners resulted in strains on existing veterans' representatives' assignments and workloads.** Decreasing workforce resources in many states have led to cuts in staffing, reassignment of staff, and unfilled positions in various programs in the AJCs. In these instances, staff are often unable, either due to their own workloads or to rules about who may do specific tasks, to fill the resulting service gaps. At the same time, the number of veterans' representatives in several states has also decreased. As a result, some states employed part-time veterans' representatives so that all areas of a

state could be served, despite concerns that part-time veterans' representatives might be called to perform other duties at the expense of their responsibilities to veterans. Other states had their veterans' representatives rotate among locations, leaving some locations unserved on any given day.

4. **AJC staff members were not as skilled as veterans' representatives at helping veterans translate their military work experiences for civilian jobs.** When looking for work, veterans need to describe their skills, experiences, and knowledge in civilian terms to demonstrate their fit for civilian jobs. Veterans' representatives generally reported being successful at using their own knowledge of the military to help veterans with this translation, whereas other AJC staff members who work with veterans are less skilled and reported depending on online tools of varying quality. Several states are currently developing or adopting tools that will develop a resume appropriate for the civilian workforce based on the veteran's military resume or list of skills.
5. **Coordination between LVERs and business services staff of other programs sometimes occurred, but was not a universal practice.** Although staff in most local areas reported coordinating employer outreach across programs, staff in other areas reported that business services staff of different programs did not share information about employer contacts and interest in hiring veterans. In those areas that did coordinate, the practices ranged from having integrated business service teams to sharing information on employer contacts.

B. Innovative approaches

From our qualitative data collection, we identified innovative or unique approaches that study states and local areas have implemented to address the challenges they face and improve services to veterans:

- **Structural variations aimed to better serve veterans.** As many military personnel separate from the military and enter the civilian workforce, states have sought to organize veterans' services to best meet the needs of their veterans. To better serve its veterans, one state administered the JVSG program with other veterans' programs, rather than as part of its ES system, to improve management of the program and veterans' access to JVSG services. In doing so, the state focused its organization on the target population—veterans—rather than on the types of services provided.
- **Data systems accessible across workforce programs.** Twelve states used one data systems, or MIS, for most or all of their DOL-funded workforce programs, including ES, TAA, JVSG, and WIA, that allowed staff from all participating programs to view customer data across programs. By implementing these systems, staff members from different programs could view services provided to veteran customers across the workforce system, as well as case notes for individual veteran customers. This approach enabled staff members across programs to develop a complete picture of veteran customers' needs and supports.
- **Promoting veterans' awareness of AJC services.** States and local areas have developed approaches to inform veterans of available services and the existence of the AJCs. One such approach is early outreach to engage veterans claiming unemployment insurance as soon as possible and inform them of the services available to them through the AJCs is an approach implemented by several states. Many are also conducting outreach to organizations serving

veterans and to veterans themselves through various approaches; one state has sent vans to large gatherings of veterans to provide services.

- **Identification of veterans and those eligible for POS.** Across the study's local areas, AJCs implemented several methods to ensure the proper identification of and appropriate delivery of services to veterans. These included (1) the development of intake forms and online registration questions that collect the detailed information necessary to determine if an individual is eligible for POS as either a veteran or a spouse; (2) the inclusion of flags in data systems so that veterans can be readily identified by staff members who access their records and aid coordination across programs that serve veterans; and (3) color coding of forms so that veterans visiting an AJC can be easily identified and given extra attention.
- **Veteran-tailored services.** Staff of several local areas recognized that veterans might feel more comfortable accessing services with other veterans. Although almost all local areas hosted or participated in veterans' job fairs or networking events, others also held veterans-only workshops and job clubs. One state has developed a structure to build the capacity of schools and programs to provide the types of training and education that are in demand by veterans, not only helping veterans currently seeking services but also ensuring the development of long-term resources for future veterans.

C. Insights from Pennsylvania and Texas

Our analyses of veterans' characteristics, service receipt, and labor market outcomes in Pennsylvania and Texas produced five key insights about veterans served by AJCs, the services veterans received, and their employment outcomes:

1. **The characteristics of veteran customers in Pennsylvania and Texas were similar.** In both states, veterans were older, more often male, and more often disabled than nonveterans. However, in these states and in the study's local areas generally, there is evidence that recently separated veterans were increasingly female and younger.
2. **Service receipt among veteran customers was high.** In both states, veterans received more services through the AJC system than their nonveteran counterparts. In addition, the veterans in those two states received more services than veterans did nationally. The high receipt of services, especially in Texas, might be due in part to services that many veterans initially receive from the veterans' representatives.
3. **Regression analyses suggest that receipt of training, referral to federal contractor jobs, and referral to employment were positively associated with veterans' average post-program quarterly earnings in both states.** In contrast, veterans' receipt of other staff-assisted core services and referral to federal jobs, in Pennsylvania, and receipt of supportive services (including needs-related payments), receipt of job search assistance, and receipt of intensive services, in Texas, were negatively associated with their outcomes. These findings—and the others that show associations between employment outcomes and service receipt—are only suggestive. Other factors that we were unable to control for may have led to a spurious correlation.

4. **Veteran customers tended to have higher post-program earnings than nonveterans.** In Pennsylvania and Texas, veteran customers had similar rates of post-program employment but higher earnings than nonveterans. They also had better post-program employment and earnings than veterans did nationally.
5. **Subgroups of veterans had different employment outcomes; however, our analyses suggest that these differences correlated more with customers' characteristics than the services they received.** For example, in Pennsylvania, the unadjusted earnings of male and female veterans were \$4,372 and \$3,594, respectively, a \$778 differential. After adjusting for customers' characteristics, the earnings differential decreased by 17 percent to \$642. The earnings differential decreased by only an additional 7 percent after adjusting for service receipt.

D. Looking forward

In 2014, two federal policy and legislative changes could affect the delivery of services to veterans through the public workforce system. First, WIOA mandated changes to the public workforce system. Although the Act does not change the role of JVSG within local areas (for example, the VETS program is still a mandatory AJC partner), it does include JVSG as an optional partner in the Combined State Plan, which could result in greater coordination across partners.

Second, as noted in Chapter I, VPL 03-14 and TEGL 19-13 issued guidance refocusing the roles and responsibilities of JVSG staff and the relationship of their duties to those of other staff members in the public workforce system. As a result of the refocusing, DVOP specialists are only to serve eligible veterans and spouses who have an SBE or are part of a special population identified by the Secretary of Labor. The guidance was intended to limit the number of people served by DVOP specialists so that they can provide those most in need with intensive services. Other AJC staff members continue to serve all veterans and spouses who do not fall into an SBE or special population category and, depending on the size of the DVOP specialist caseloads, may also serve veterans with SBEs. LVERs are to perform duties related to outreach to the employer community, such as organizing job fairs, coordinating with organizations to promote job training for veterans, promoting credentialing opportunities, and informing federal contractors of the process to recruit veterans.

As a result of this refocusing, states will have to assess the number of LVERs and DVOP specialists they need to provide outreach and facilitation services at the level needed, especially as more military men and women return home and seek civilian employment. Because DVOP specialists will be allowed to serve a smaller subset of veterans—estimated at about 30 percent of those veterans seeking AJC services (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a)—WIA, ES, and other AJC staff will likely serve more veteran customers than they have in the past. It will become especially important that they understand and apply the guidance to ensure that veterans receive the level and timeliness of service to which they are entitled. As a whole, the workforce system will have to consider how to tailor services to meet veterans' unique needs to ultimately aid veterans' success in the civilian labor market.

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