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Resume Building and Job Leads Brochure

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Abstract

Resume Building and Job Leads Brochure was created as a Capstone project to address the ongoing problem of homeless veterans in Monterey County not being unemployed. These former military members are not able to provide for themselves with a stable income in the civilian world. The project was approved by Bobby Merritt of the Marina, California Veterans Transition Center (VTC). The formatting for this project was a brochure, also known as a pamphlet, which catered to the needs of veterans experiencing homelessness who were aiming to gain employment. The brochure includes information on how to improve written resumes, key points on what employers are seeking in new hires, a list of agencies that focus on veterans in search of employment, along with other resources. The assessment plan was to supply brochures to as many veterans as possible at the VTC. Expected outcomes for the number of veterans reached by the brochure was about 50% of those enrolled at the VTC. Of the 100 people at the VTC, 75 participants received the brochures. The results were better than expected in numbers. A survey was also conducted and brochure users were very pleased.

Agency & Communities Served

The Veterans Transitional Center, is located at 220 twelfth street, in Marina, California, and the sole mission of VTC is, “to empower Veterans to transition from crisis to self-sufficiency.” Since 1996, this agency, which is a 501c3 non-profit, has operated in the former U.S. Army Base Ft. Ord. The property that was sold after it closed has been used as a complex to provide homeless Veterans and their families with food, clothing, case management, life skills, substance abuse counseling, benefit enrollment, medical referrals, employment training, and housing. The communities served are homeless veterans that have served in the military and are currently eligible to receive benefits through the VA.

One of the programs offered at the VTC for veterans is an emergency residential men's shelter program. In this program, the housing unit is a duplex that has ten beds that is funded through the V.A Health Care. It focuses on getting veterans off the streets, providing them with temporary shelter, while assisting them with getting jobs, applying for housing with the Monterey County Low Income Housing and providing them with any assistance they need with substance abuse counseling, therapy and lifes skills. Veteran’s enrolled in the Emergency Residential Housing Program are allowed to stay up to sixty days.

VTC has had an occupancy rate of 89 – 97% at any time in the past year. In the emergency residential program, the people served are homeless veterans who meet the eligibility requirements from the V.A to have benefits, to be eligible a person has to have served in the military and has to be discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable discharge. Some of the services that case managers provide to clients enrolled in the program are assistance

with applying for jobs, help with getting bus passes, taxi vouchers and even donated cars to make it to their doctor appointments, interviews, V.A. appointments and more.

Case managers also assist clients with pantry access and will make sure they are adhering to the rules of the program while in the program. They also do case notes and work with the client on a plan that will help them in their goals and get them connected to the right programs and services to best assist them in becoming independent and integrated back in society.

Problem Description

There are a lack of employment opportunities and employment resources for homeless veterans who have served in our country. Research gathered from The U.S Department of Veterans Affairs states that, “veterans continue to struggle to gain employment because of culture gaps between civilian society and their military pasts, as well as a lack of seamless integration amongst Veteran care programs.” (Clark, 2012). There appears to be this stigma attached to homeless veterans that places them in a box and makes them look undesirable for employment.

Contributing Factors

The first factor that contributes to homeless veterans not being able to find employment is the lack of transportation. Maintaining and having a car costs money, along with the cost of insurance and other miscellaneous things that can occur with having a car. The reality is that a veteran that is homeless has no way to afford such costs and in the area of Monterey County, with the high cost of living on the peninsula, it makes it that much harder for a person who is homeless to make it. In Monterey California, the median home price is \$664,300; while the

home median price in King City California, a city that is approximately is \$ 336,301. That is a \$459,299 dollars more difference.

Here are some more examples of how expensive it is to live in Monterey County

Cost of living per year

- Grocery -110.4%
- Health -128.5 91%
- Housing - 344.1%
- Median Home Cost -\$795,600
- Utilities- 87.1%
- Transportation - 92.1%
- Miscellaneous - 101.3% (Best places, 2020)

Best places. (2020). *Cost of living.*

The second factor contributing to homeless veterans not gaining employment is the stereotype that they are a risk to be hired. Some employers perceive veterans who are homeless as people that choose to be homeless, don't want to work, are on drugs, or are lazy. ; the truth is our veterans come from an environment where they have served for this country, some were battling issues like PTSD and separation anxiety once they were discharged from service. These kinds of issues can make it hard for veterans to get employment. Most employers do not want to hire someone that they feel they are going to have to watch or look after. Some were affected so badly from being in war, they suffer from issues like PTSD, and it makes it hard for them to go and look for jobs. Here are some facts from the military wallet concerning the issues surrounding homeless veteran's. There are currently 67,495 homeless veterans in the United

States, out of that number, there are 67, 495; reasons that contribute to veterans being homeless are due to substance abuse, loss of shelter, no money and unemployment (Guina, 2019).

The third factor that contributes to homeless veterans not being employed is lack of skills. Homeless veterans can struggle to get employed because they do not have the skills that are needed for the workforce. Veterans rely on the skills they had while in the military, and sometimes that was 4-20 years ago; then when they go to interview, most employers do not ask for the military experience they had and see it as invaluable to their corporation. (Cavness, 2020). Veterans also are not used to the civilian lifestyle and that can also make them unsuitable for a lot of the jobs in the employment sector.

Consequences

When you are a veteran of the military, people look at you with a certain level of respect and admiration. So imagine how a veteran feels after serving their country for so many years, to come home facing problems with PTSD, coping with purpose and self worth, and then not having a retirement to live off on, no transferable skills to make them qualified for a job; leads are contributing elements to being homeless. These are some of the issues that veterans face when they come home from war. This is why some become homeless; a lot of the consequences that can be linked to being homeless and unemployed. This alone can bring a person health and mental issues, substance abuse problems which could lead to long term homelessness and a desire to not want to seek employment or have the motivation to do better (Kashdan, 2014). It is important for homeless veterans to be employed because it helps them achieve stability, independence, increase their skills and obtain income.

Homeless repetitiveness is something that can occur for a homeless veteran who can not find a job or housing. What usually happens is when they find a job, sometimes they get overwhelmed with the new changes and cannot deal with it. So they end up quitting or leaving the job without giving it a chance. It's important that there be a support system set up for the homeless so that they have someone to mentor them and ease them into the transition of the work field; they are for veterans who have been homeless for years and can not find employment. Some factors that lead to homeless people remaining in their situation are age, exit destination and security deposit assistance. This puts homeless veterans at a higher risk of homelessness than others (Naeh, 2015).

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Lack of Transportation	Homeless Vets have a higher number in being unemployed while in the VTC Program	No desire or motivation to go look for employment
Lack of skills that are needed for the current workforce	Veterans are not seen as marketable to compete in the workforce. This can lead to a downfall in the economy and an increase in poverty.	Long term unemployment and homelessness.
Risk to hire	Employers do not give homeless veterans a chance based on negative stereotypes that the veteran is a substance abuser or too lazy to find employment.	Health deterioration, suicide or substance abuse issues.

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Capstone Project

A brochure pamphlet guide was given to homeless veterans in the program at VTC and will be created for this capstone project. This brochure gave key points in what should be on a resume and how to write one as well as a listing of employers in the county that hire homeless veterans. Brochures were distributed to participants in the programs on October 16, 2020 on the premises of VTC. A video was shown with a welcome to the program and what employers are looking for so that participants could get an introductory insight on what they should focus on and how to dress for an interview. There is a great need for employment resources for homeless veterans and this capstone project brought those resources to the veterans at VTC and made them available. The capstone project focused on these key elements, plus the number of homeless veterans that received brochures and a survey from participants about what they thought of the information received.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to help homeless veterans who are enrolled in the Veterans Transition Program participate and know what employers are looking for when applying for a job so that they will have the key components to help them gain employment. This project aims to open the doors of opportunity so that veterans can speak with prospective employers, get their

resumes more looked at and start bridging the gap between veterans and the community. This will provide access to the veterans and will be convenient and affordable at the same time.

Project Justification

There is a need to implement workshops to help veterans with their resumes, give them tips on what to wear to an interview, what employers look for when hiring. Access for these kinds of services are not available to homeless veterans as they are to the general public. More needs to be done for the homeless veterans in our communities as well as making them aware of the help that is out there for them in securing employment and getting back on their feet. (Pine Street Inn, 2020)

Project Implementation

The capstone project and the brochure literature was carried out remotely. There were research tips on how to write a resume, how to look for employers as a veteran in today's market and resources made available for veterans in the VTC Program. Some of the key points addressed were how to write up a resume and promote yourself to an employer without having a two page resume. All corresponding emails relating to the remote event were sent to all Case Managers with information on the brochures and when to distribute them out to each person in their specific program, as an effort to adhere to current COVID-19 guidelines. In the brochures, a mask and a short survey was included. Participants were asked to return their surveys to the case managers and case managers to forward them in email to the intern.

Another part of the process of getting this capstone together was to reach out to utilize the services at VTC so that veterans could get all the help they needed in securing employment

opportunities. The VTC allowed access to their computer room depending on space availability (of course) to any veteran in the program to work on their resume or do research for jobs while during the pandemic on a first come first served basis. A detailed implementation plan and timeline can be seen in the Scope of Work in Appendix A.

Assessment Plan

The way to measure the effectiveness of having brochure packets by first looking at the number of veterans that showed up to the informational gathering and keeping track of the ones that receive the information. Another tool used was measurement of the effectiveness and success of the information handed out and the survey completed by the veterans that asked questions of how well the information was received and if this information used could increase chances of gaining employment, as well as what areas of improvement might need more help.

Expected Outcomes

The brochure welcome packet will help veterans with updating their resume and lock them into local employment agencies that can help them with job interviews, and gaining employment opportunities. This information will be a great tool for veterans that are eager and excited about working. There will be a decrease in the number of homeless veterans that are without a job and new opportunities for veterans to become stabilized and a step closer to not being homeless. At VTC there are currently 100 people enrolled, and the hope is to target 50 of those veterans or maybe more in getting the brochures for job success.

Project Results

The job informational brochures was a success, the case managers at VTC reported that out of the 100 brochures that were sent to them to pass out to their clients, 75 participants

received the brochures. Many participants were already starting to set up appointment times to visit the computer lab to work on resumes or job search. Another result was the surveys that were received through email from the case managers had great feedback. According to the surveys that were provided in the pamphlets, four of those veterans stated they loved the information they received, would definitely recommend new veterans that enter the program to take advantage of the brochure program, and participants would do this event again if given the opportunity.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The reasoning behind homeless veterans being unemployed is the lack of resources, availability to access those resources, and no guide on writing a resume, to build connections with employers, and agencies that look to hire veterans that are homeless. The planning it took to get a brochure done in a remote setting was time consuming. Detailed information was developed on writing a resume, agencies that cater to hiring veterans and how to land a job in an interview all in a format that could be easily read and understood by the veteran receiving the information. In addition, this also needed to represent the Veteran Transition Center in a professional way that not only highlights the program but addresses the needs of homeless veterans in the program.

The strengths in this project is the resources and information provided to veterans to assist them on their journey of seeking employment. The success was the implementation of the brochures, the support from my mentor, the case managers and the rest of the staff at Veterans Transition Center. Canva.com was an excellent resource that assisted with the brochure design and Office Depot assisted in printing the brochures. This project was a collaboration of resources

to make it complete. The social issue in this project was the need to help veterans become employed and utilize resources that they can easily access.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
Kick off day to getting Brochures welcome packets for veterans into gear		June 1, 2020	Mechelle Harris
Researching on resume building, employees that hire veterans		June 8, 2020	Mechelle Harris
Sign in sheet posted on the VTC website and the case managers office for those interested in participating		June 1, 2020-Aug 1, 2020	Mechelle Harris/VTC Staff
Community advertising and Outreach for Homeless Veterans, Volunteers and Community Support	Put out flyers about the VTC Program and the services it provides to attract new clients who could benefit from receiving the brochure welcome packets	July 1-31, 2020	Americorp/ Volunteer Diego
Resume guidelines printed in brochures for veterans		September 21, 2020	Mechelle Harris
Start work on welcome packets	10:00am -11:00am	September 22, 2020	Mechelle Harris

Set up meeting via Zoom to discuss coordination of how pickup of welcome packets will be distributed at VTC due to remote order in place	10:00am-11:00am	September 24, 2020	Volunteers, VTC Staff and Mechelle Harris
Put together masks and sanitizer packets for veterans that attend on Oct 16, 2020		Sept 25th and 26th	Mechelle Harris
Welcome packets and brochures distribution	Assigned room at Veterans Transitional Center	October 16, 2020	VTC/Mechelle Harris
printed survey after the event takes place.	Completion of surveys	October 16, 2020	Mechelle Harris