

**SDSU Interwork/VR & E Outreach Meeting**

>> Hi my name is Ashley Johnson I'm the vocational officer for the rehabilitation program. I'm thrilled to be here and very excited so many graduated from this program. I also am an alum. I'm very familiar with the program you went through and I know the great work that's produced from this area and very excited have the opportunity to talk to you guys about what we do at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. It's probably different than what you learned and heard about so we are here to clarify what the situation is. I'm very glad you're here. With me today is our HR from the San Diego regional office. I'm also extra lucky because Tom is also an alum and is here with me today. We have two regional Oakland officers here today. We hope we can answer any questions or comments you may have about our program and inform me about a lot of good information.

>> My name is Geneva and I work in the HR office as one of the HR liaisons. I work closely with Ashley on team rehabilitation and education office when it comes to hiring. I know a lot about - I'm sure a lot of you have gone on there and said what is this, what does this mean? I'm happy to help answer any questions you have and help Ashley go through it and let you know what we look at from an HR perspective.

>> I'm from Oakland, Bay area. I'm extremely lucky and fortunate that Ashley allowed me to be here today. I promise to not poach anybody from San Diego State. However, with that being said if your life or interest to go north to my area we welcome you. Sit back, relax and take notes and enjoy the presentation. Please ask questions. We know going through USAJobs to get hired can be very complicated. Thanks to Geneva she is here to help answer all of those questions. Again, thank you and look forward to working this out.

>> It's friendly competition. [laughter]

>> What does a vocational rehabilitation counselor do? What we do with the VA may be different than what you have heard in the past. We are here to clarify what you are doing as a counselor for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our overall mission is to assist veterans with service disabilities, maintain and retain suitable employment. I will go into a lot of detail about that because I want you to fully understand what the counselors do. First and foremost, VRC is not just a program it's an entitlement program. They receive a 10 percent service disability which is a degraded disability evaluation system. We have to oversee something other than dishonorable discharge. Those things make a veteran eligible. As a counselor the eligibility is determined prior to his meeting with the veteran. We as counselors see the veteran once they are determined eligible and we are now there to determine entitlement. This is a big decision. Counselors are saying yes or no to the veteran's entitlement to our program.

>> We got a little feedback from online. If you can talk a little slower.

>> I apologize, I'm a fast talker. I will try to slow it down. I'm a fast walker and I'm a fast talker. I have a reputation. But I am a fast talker. I apologize. Thank you. As he was stating, the rehab counselors determine if a veteran is entitled to the program. What does that look like and how you make that decision? What will occur is our veterans come in through orientation. At the orientation they will have a group orientation where they take an assessment and see what the program is about and then they will get the opportunity to meet one-on-one with rehab counselors. That is potentially you guys. During that point a rehab counselor will speak with that veteran about their whole story. We need to get a good understanding of the individual sitting in front of you because what you are trying to determine is, does this individual has impairments to employment? Are those impairments related to their service connected conditions? One of the biggest questions we have to look at is how they overcome those impairments? Just because an individual has impairments does not mean they have not overcome it. What do I mean by that? What is that individual already bring to the table? Educational and employment wise. Are they working? Is that employment suitable? Is a reason to believe they need assistance to overcome those impairments from us? That's one of the biggest decisions we are making as a VOC rehab counselor. If you say yes to those questions and know they have not overcome, that is what we consider employment handicap. Then we will look at for most of our veterans they are based on those three questions. We have a couple additional things you need to look at. The veterans walk in the door and there only 10 percent or their entitlement determination has expired which is 12 years from original disability rating, then we have to find something in addition to that the. Is there something significant preventing this individual from obtaining? Some things we can think about, even with the skills we can provide this individual with a be additional things they have to overcome? Such as, alcohol or drug abuse could be something that is very significant for them to overcome. Homelessness. Criminal background. These are additional things we know will be significant that we may need to system with throughout the process. Want to evaluate not only the employment handicap but that serious employment handicap. In order to determine entitlement. When you look at disability. We may find it person who's appropriate but it's not the right time. We will make sure they are ready for the program. They may not be. Drug and alcohol abuse, potential homelessness. They are out of the country for six months probably not the best time to be participating in an employment program. Upcoming surgery or off the feet for a while. Probably not the best time for them to get in the program. The first initial meeting of veterans we determine entitlement and feasibility. Something we like to stress and you guys understand, but the public doesn't is that we are an employment program. We often get confused with the G.I. Bill which is an education program. We are not about education. We provide education? I will get into that and the answer is yes. The end result is not the degree. The end result is suitable employment.

Any questions about the entitlement process? Something I think is important to our recap counselors to know is that we are delivering yeses and nose. Unfortunately, everybody he walks in the door will not walk away happy. We want to give as many resources as we can so they walk away with something. It may not be what they walked in the door wanting. I'd like to say we are need-based program and not want space program. A lot of individuals want certain things and unfortunately because of the parameters of our program we are unable to provide what they need. When those two things match is a beautiful world. We'll talk about that more as we go too. Once we determine entitlement, what is the next step? Want to help this individual determine what is the suitable vocational goal. I stressed that word suitable because we want to make sure the individuals coming into our program obtain employment that is not going to further aggravate their disabilities. We are coming in with what their parents are in this week is learned in your program, what makes sense? If someone walks in with a weird back impairment and have trouble lifting or standing or sitting or prolonged walking we want to put them in the medical field? Probably not. Those are the type of conversations were having with her veterans. What is suitable? We will make sure it's mentally and physically appropriate. But there is more. That is not enough. Many times, veterans will come to us and say I want to do a certain type of job. There is not a viable labor market. Physically and mentally it may be very appropriate, but we look at what's out there there's not many jobs. When they're done with our program we want to make sure that the will be able to get employment. They want that too, but we are the professionals and we need to remind them what that looks like. At the end of the day, it's their life and they can do what they want to do, but VOC rehab can only support the next step. Want to guide them in the right direction and we want them to choose to utilize our program and end up being suitably employed. We are going to guide them on resources to look at what are the jobs out there? The jobs that match their interests, aptitudes and abilities. We take an assessment. We use the assessment to help determine the interests and abilities and aptitudes are. Not the only measure we want to use and is not necessarily the most important measure we want to use. Went to look at what other transferable skills? What are they come to the table with? What did they have to offer? As a counselor we have the opportunity to help them explore that. We need them to be a part of the process we also need to guide them. We want to determine a suitable plan of employment and then we develop an individual written rehab plan. These plans can range anywhere from two weeks to six years. As a rehab counselor in a perfect world, you would be with that veteran from day one to the end which would be successful in suitably employed. We'll talk about that as well. You will help them write this plan and that plan will include what is required for them to become suitably employed. 9/10 times that includes training. Although in an education program we want to make sure that they have the skills and tools necessary to become suitably employed. A lot of times I'll be additional training but that can range from certificate, vocational tools all the way to potentially Master's. As the VOC Council we talked about this is your case management portion of the job. Once the plan is written we have a caseload. Veterans that are assigned to, you're likely the one that wrote the plan you will assist them throughout the plan. If you do send them to school what you need to be successful in school? Papers, pen, highlighters and white out? Probably. Rehab counselors are able to provide them with supplies they need to be successful. If they are in school and struggling, can we provide tutoring services? Yes. You can provide them to tutoring. If they don't already own a computer we provide computer? Yes. We want to give them the resources and tools they need to be successful.

>> Whatever support we provide outside of academics?

>> Medical is one of them, individuals we are dealing with have issues with employment. We want to address those things. First course of action would be that sincere the VA we would refer them to the VA hospital. We are making sure they are taking care of all their service connections and nonservice connection impairments. We are support and coaching when they are struggling we are the individual counselor and we talked about the training in life. We talk about what's going on at home and what's going on with their disabilities and what they are doing to make themselves employable. We want to make sure they are networking and getting out there. Is there anything else you can think of? Once we have completed the training necessary we move into what we call the job ready face. Now they have got skills. We assisted them with getting the resume up to par and the interview skills are where they need to be in time to look for work. Of course, we are encouraging this the whole way because we are employment program, but once the completed those skills and training we want to make sure they are actively jobseeking. We often assist with jobseeking. As a rehab counselor that can still be your responsibility to assist with the employment process but we have a lot of additional resources as far as that's concerned as well. We currently in the Sandia regional office have employment specialists. The people who are designated to help her veterans in the employment phase. We also work closely with the Department of Labor and they assist us as well. On occasion we have contracts with counselors to assist with the employment phase. Sometimes the veteran says there's a lot of people helping me. You want as many people to help you as possible. This is a much more involved process. During the training phase, your meeting or having contact with the counselor at least once per term. During employment phase, the contact is going to increase in will be required to meet with that or speak with the individual every 30 days. It's really an important piece of the program. The second the veteran gets a job or career are we going to say goodbye and nice knowing you? Answer is no. As a rehab counselor you will make sure that job and veteran are a good fit. If there are resources or accommodations that individual needs with their employer is unable to provide we want to assist. We want to make sure that that job is not further aggravating the disability and this is really where they need to be. We stick with the veteran at minimum for 60 days to make sure they are good fit. After the 60 day mark if everything is going well, we consider them rehabilitated and what I mean by that is successfully in suitably employed. He said I'd get into a little more detail. There's a lot more to it than you just heard. One thing I do want to bring up the invention is we have individuals who are not feasible. When they are not feasible to work we want to see if we can assist them with independent living. Although we are employment program, those we do not find employable at the time we want to see them increase their independence at home in the community. In addition to employment plans we also help with individual independent living plants. We can assist with lift chairs, getting them involved in the community. Helping them with ramps, grab bars in those type of things. We have that assisted technology as well and we are helping them become more independent. The majority of our participants are going to go into an employment plan. But those who can't provide additional services. During the training phase, you are responsible for having communication with the school. You and the school will also have a lot of communication via certified official at the campus who will be one of your friends. Those were the people you will say hey, this veteran is attending this term and going to school for This amount of time. School invoices us to make sure that we pay for these things. There's a lot of admin work that's required for this position. You will be reaching out to the school and letting them know that you approved this particular program and you will be paying for it based on the prior approval. Yes?

>> Does the veteran receive a monthly stipend?

>> Thank you, Spence. I'm sorry did not know the answer to that let me tell you. [laughter]

>> Yes. While the veterans are in our training program they receive what we call an allowance or a monthly stipend because we want to make sure that they are successful in training is an important piece of this. We know we need to provide them some financial funding. We are also responsible as the VOC rehab counselor to take the information from this school certified official to make sure paying her veterans appropriately. I wish I could say the payment process is easy, but it can sometimes be complex meeting rates can be different based on the veteran who is. [can't understand] There's a little bit of math involved. I'm sure all fully capable for the math in our program. Any questions about that? That's pretty much my overview for the job in general.

>> Cannot impact their ability. [voice low]

>> The decision we make in VOC rehab will not affect the ability to participate in any other programs. That brings up a really good point.

>> If the veteran is found not feasible for the VOC rehab program will prevent them from other benefits? Answer to that is no. They would still be eligible to receive outside benefits from other programs. Any other questions?

>> Which type of schools are involved?

>> The question is what kind of schools do they attend? VOC rehab has unique program. We caution people about telling them if they're entitled. It is not appropriate. That’s their job to make those decisions. And make those determinations as to what is appropriate. When it comes to institutions, we utilize private, public, vocational and a lot of on-the-job training. We do we call unpaid work experience which is similar to on-the-job training with government agencies. We really are in individualized program. There is not a cookie-cutter answer to anything we do. I think that's why it's really important to know as the counselor you have a lot of freedom and a lot of flexibility to support individual sitting in front of you. But it needs to make sense and be well justified. Our counselors do need to have a good -it's important you play a crucial role in helping the individual determine the right direction. We have a lot of resources and opportunities to utilize. We are very lucky in that way. Any other questions?

>>. [voice low]

>> The question was, do we have a list of vendors or can they bring a brand-new entity to us? It's somewhat of a complex question. The first part is yes, basically most schools letter G.I. Bill approved will automatically be approved under the VOC rehab program. We are VOC rehab and we think we are special in the best. If veterans come to us with the program it's not approved we can work on trying to prove those programs. It would not be as simple per se as a school that is already VA approved. We want to lead individuals to schools that are already being approved because about 99/100 those are appropriate. There are occasions where veterans are interested in this crane operating school and we don't have any in the area so maybe we consider that. The unique schools, we want to be careful and make sure they are well worth the money were about to spend on them. We can absolutely go through the process to potentially get that.

>> How long can the process take in general?

>> Unfortunately, I have the answer to that. It's out of my control. We can submit all the documentation on other individuals. I don't have the answer and I wouldn't feel comfortable saying.

>> The veteran receiving service also applies to state and VA services?

>> The answer is yes. There are things that VOC rehab can't do. As the rehab counselor we want to potentially refer them to other programs so they are getting the most benefit needed.

>> In that case wouldn't need to be that the counselor communicates with the other counselor so they don't duplicate?

>> Absolutely. If you were to refer them she was asking do need to make sure you're not depleting services in the answer would be yes to that. Really, we want to refer them to state for the things that the VA is not able to provide and there should not be a duplication of services. That's an important part of being a rehab counselor. Knowing resources that are out there and communicating with referrals you have made in order to not have duplicate vocational services. Any other questions? Let's move to the next slide. Skills of a successful vocational rehabilitation counselor. Strong rapport builder. As I'm sure all very aware going through a counseling program you know how important rapport is. I like to stress that meeting the individual for the first time is extremely important and you want to make sure you've made a good connection with that individual. They understand the relationship between the VOC rehab counselor in the veteran. This job is not easy. Like I stated before we have to say no. I only talk about saying no for the entitlement process. Even once we found them entitled we have to say no. We talked about what suitable employment looks like and we want to make sure the end goal is going and appropriate direction that is suitable. A lot of times I said we have individuals who come to us and we are able to provide a job. You do have to say I know you want to do this, but unfortunately am only able to provide you with this. It's got to be an individual who is able to build that report quickly but also be a good communicator. You need to justify your decisions. You're making big, life changing decisions for the individual sitting in front of you and they may not be happy with the decision. We want to make sure that they understand the decision.

>> Can we step backwards for a second. We have a bit of laq. This question, since I got in late, if your hard-won location and easily transfer to another location?

>> No. Not keep everybody in San Diego! [laughter] I was going to say, used to be a little bit easier. It's not so easy anymore. I will let HR speak on that she could probably save more on that.

>> We used to have a program called hardship transfers to if you were married and your spouse moved to Oakland and you had a program where you as a federal employee could transfer. As long as they had an open position -we don't utilize the program any longer. What we now have is an employee initiated transfer. What you have to do is you have to actually apply to an open position. If there is a position in Florida, Jackson and are hoping to move to Jackson there would have to be that open position. He would apply for it based on your authority if you had to schedule a letter or fell under a veteran level. Then you would have two go through an interview process. There is no longer a transfer program within the VA.

>> Another question that came in how large is a typical caseload for a counselor?

>> Very good question. Depending on the regional office you go to that can impact the amount of regiments you have on your caseload. VOC rehab used to be under a rock. We are no longer under the rock. They do not improve the lives of the veterans in our program and that counselors that work for us. It's all moving in the right direction. Currently, the goal is 125. A caseload of 125 veterans or less. On average want to keep it there. I would not be being honest if you think you walk in the door and you might not have a caseload higher than 125. That's actually why I'm here because we are able to hire somebody VOC rehab counselors to decrease that caseload size. For many years was very difficult to find a VOC rehab counselor position. There may be one or two across the nation. We've seen the floodgates open as far as they are addressing the fact that we need more assistance. We are looking for VOC rehab counselors to maintain that 125 or below caseload. You have a veteran on your caseload for six months to six years. That's the nature of the work we do. Time management. It's extremely Important in this position. Organizational skills and time management are a must in this position. You will have about 40 or so fires that need to be put out at the same time. You really do need to learn quickly how to prioritize and address the work that is before you. Really helps be organized in this position. Unfortunately, at the end of the day every phone call might not be returned in every email might not be responded to. Customer service is important to us. We do expect those things to happen promptly we also understand that you will walk away every day without your list being completed. Labor market knowledge. I think you guys learned a lot of this in your program as well. You want to have a good understanding of vocationally what is out there. What the demands are. What the skills are in the demands of the actual job are. Labor market knowledge is important. School training knowledge. Depending on what area you are in you want to find out what rooms exist. If a veteran comes in are interested in being a diver, what's schools are out that they can provide diving? Resource applicants. We touched on this as well. We want to know resources because although we can do a lot as VOC rehab counselors begin to everything. There are other resources within our communities and within our nation that can assist. It's good to know your resources. Strong communicator. Sorry, question?

>> Tina military knowledge background?

>> I can speak from experience and I was never in the military. I will admit that I am married to military gentlemen, so I do have some knowledge. I would not say a lot. It is helpful. I'm not going to lie to have a report and be able to talk about different types of jobs and transferable skills that a military bring to us. You can learn that stuff. I was never shy to be honest and open with the individual sitting by me and Sam not quite sure what the job looks like or what that entails. Most military individuals are happy to share with you their time during the military experience. You can learn that information. It's helpful. We have a lot of counselors that are veterans. It's not necessary.

>>. [voice low]

>> Government hiring is a little different and there absolutely are veteran preferences but there are times that we host that it will be available for everyone and that's why we are there.

>> Very different postings and hiring authorities. We have a system used to hire new employees. The majority of the time we have veterans preference and you have to to either have schedule a which is really good. If you don't have veterans preference or disability over 30 percent. Those will put you higher on the list or allow you to apply for the job. We do have what is called DU and that's delegating examining unit. That's open to all U.S. citizens. We are opening these positioning's the beginning of July. That will be out on USAJobs. That's wonderful because it is nationwide and it opens it up to the U.S.. We'll be hiring into an external hire, mid June. I recommend to everybody apply even if you don't have an hiring authority.

>> The scheduling office is right behind Ralph's on the I-5.

>> 7575 Metropolitan.

>> If you have disability use that kit to schedule a letter that will give you hiring key to unlock the ability to be pooled as part of the applicants. It's not required.

>> If you're able to get it it's helpful.

>> Gives you points on the hiring. If we go by points we have 30 points to get in. That doesn't mean they will get hired over you it just allows them more certain. It's really good.

>> Another question. For students still in the Master's program or other folks or other jobs underneath the counselor level?

>> Not really. In order to be a VOC rehab counselor with the VA you must complete your Master's. We do have administrative support and staff positions. There are opportunities, but it's probably not exactly what you are looking for. If you are interested in doing more administrative support roles, you could do that while going to school.

>> The question about the candidate in the Master's program that would maybe like to work in the accounting related field starts sooner before getting a Master's degree? Is there a transition program?

>> The way it's phrased is there's jobs for the VOC rehab counselor.

>> Like an intern? Okay.

>> There is a position that is called the pathway program. It's a federal way of getting somebody who has not completed her Master's degree, but would like to start out working with the VOC rehab counselor or doing limited duties of a VOC rehab counselor with the VA. What I'm going to speak about specifically is something that I went through. I was going to San Diego State and the San Diego regional office was able to hire me as a permanent full-time employee under the pathways program. While it was going to school at night, I was working for the San Diego regional office during the day. Once I have completed my degree, the head of the skills and desires of what they wanted in the counselor, they can turn into an permanent employee. That is just one way we can get in there. Internship of course is another way. If you are veteran, I know how many in the audience are veterans, but you can work in a work-study program or nonpaid if your chapter 31. I don't know if that answers your question. If you still want to maintain getting your foot in the door as VRC or rehab counselor with the VA that would be one way.

>> I believe I'm coming back on the 31st to discuss internship opportunities as well. We currently have a current student that is on her practicum hours on our site.

>> A couple more questions here. What is the interview process look like? Individual interview, case scenarios?

>> It is definitely a panel interview. It's not a one-on-one interview. It can range anywhere from 3-7 questions. There will be scenario like questions. Performance-based questions.

>> There are performance-based interview questions. It's really helpful if you go to OPM.gov you can look for interview questions and will give you a large list of possible questions. One thing I would recommend, when you are in the interview I always tell people to bring paper with you. Interview questions can be one part, to part or three part four part. You want to make sure you're answering all parts of the interview question. That's why always have a piece of paper and jot down even if I need the person to repeat it, I ask please repeat that. I'll write it down in my head as I'm writing it down that's when I built my answer. You want to make sure you are touching all bases.

>> That's excellent advice. That's absolutely true. Every time I interview for government decision I write down questions. There's no point talking for them to repeat the question. We can't just clarify the question. We usually say that at the beginning of the interview but people ask. We will not respond to you in that way but we will repeat the question.

>> I have another question. As we talk briefly about employment services I'm interested in providing vocational evaluation and testing services to consumers as a service provider at present is this the services provided in-house or contracted by a third-party vendor? If the latter is the case, what are some of the minimum training requirements and a point of contact for learning more about that?

>> I think you can really answer that question. We have to be careful about contracting.

>> I can only speak a little bit. I do contract with a company that I into the VA and the help with the initial evaluation. As part of that initial evaluation they are using the in-house assessment process. There are other different contracts out there that provide assessments for different programs. Like chapter 26. I think most of the times contractors use the impact assessment. Sometimes individual counselors miss the assessment portion. We have other assessments will give them unofficially. That's not the purpose of my position. I don't know anybody that hires just for assessment.

>> Are you hired to do that?

>> Requirements are the same as what the VA is looking for. You don't determine entitlement as a contract counselor. The VA counselor does that. I would move forward with interviewing them getting all information a VA counselor would do during a initial evaluation and guiding them through the process of determining appropriate vocational goals and gathering documentation brought three positions they are examining and helping them get that information in whole package to the counselor at the VA who will then make the decision in support what makes sense.

>> How to get hired?

>> What are the requirements for being hired? [crosstalk]

>> That's a complex question.

>> At a minimum what do they need?

>> To get hired as a contractor there is a minimum of a master's degree.

>> Government contracting is complex and not determined on one goal. It's a national contract and we can't speak to it.

>> I just know what I had when they came in. I hadn't a resume in an interview after that.

>> This is another thing that you probably think every job there will be change. And we all know that. As soon as you get comfortable the governmental process it potentially will change. Just being prepared and being flexible. Embrace change rather than resist it because it is here and it will continue to be. Political savvy. That might seem silly working for a government agency a need to be politically savvy. You need to understand the chain of command and the importance of the agency you're presenting. As a VA employee we represent the VA and that's quite a roll to hold. Regulation review work. Everything we do falls under laws and regulations. Want to make sure we are very comfortable. You might not always have the ability to research what the answer is, yes we are all here to support each other but the more you familiarize yourself with the laws and regulations, the stronger you are as a counselor. Team player, that's a pretty general one but it's true. It's not an easy job. I'm confident that most of you be more than successful with our position. I'm not trying to scare anyone away. When he gets to feel comfortable working for the VA, but I also want you to know support is important and that goes back to the team player. We are a team although we have our individual caseloads. The: mission is the same at the end of the day. Have you apply for a VRC position? If you want to work for the government have to familiarize yourself with USA jobs. We have been doing in the past and we will continue to do is send announcement that people can apply to introduce them. We will show them a job posted the VA and information will be on there. It's wise if you are interested to go ahead and get on USAJobs creative. The only way to apply is to have an account. You need to make sure that you already have an account going. You can already start uploading your information. To apply for a counselor position with the VA have to have that Master's degree. He will do it through USAJobs and create an account. Find announcements by searching for keywords such as rehabilitation counselor. He has will have this information in your emails. You want to take close attention to closing dates. There's no flexibility when it comes to this information. Then we talked about different hiring authorities. There's a lot of different hiring authorities. You will be able to see what it falls under and whether or not you will be able to apply. >> There will be some hiring jobs that you will see. See tab is for career transitions. These are people that are already employees with the VA. If we have a position at Balboa and the VRC person that was there left in the position opened up. If that's an internal move, they have to clear we call courage transition programs. That's to make sure that this employee is eligible to take the position. Were that position not only opens with a employee but for employees all over the nation. Maybe they are at the facility and they don't have a job any longer. Then they are eligible for that position. Federal employees. This is me I'm under competitive. I'm already a federal employee. I can apply for other federal jobs. Individuals with disabilities. This is that schedule a letter. This is what I say is really important. If you have a disability to get your schedule a letter. It will open more opportunities for you to apply. Internal to agency, this is another one that is only to the agency. It is not VA wide.

>> A couple of more questions. The CRC requirement?

>> CRC is not required. Most of our counselors do have CRC but it's not required.

>> What if you're close to having a Master's degree?

>> No. Unfortunately, the question was can you apply for about to have your degree? The answer is no. You must have it. Although we have a fabulous San Diego regional office HR liaison here, she's not the only HR that is involved in this process. Again, government employment is a little unique in the hiring process goes through a centralized HR office. We will never see your application if you don't meet the minimum criteria. Even though we may know you and want you, if you did not complete something correctly, we will actually never see it. Something important to think about, a federal resume looks a bit different than a typical resume. The things that we really want you to focus on the competency. It's really important when you're writing your resume for a position is that you're going to the job announcement thoroughly utilizing the keywords that are in that resume and making sure meet the criteria. We might know you and I know you're fabulous but when I store centralized process they will look to make sure the competency matches.

>> You have to have special authority. We are opening external for BRC the second we pick you. Those are two hirings that will come out for the VRC. The first thing that will get you in here is how you will be eligible. The second thing is that resume. Here in San Diego we don't get your resumes. We do the recruitment process but we have the HR summit in Denver and everyone that applies, all the applications go to HRC. We have four HR liaisons there that review all of the resumes. I'm telling you how you're going to get qualified is by writing these techniques. You will use everything that you have learned in your school and show us how you have this confidence. You don't have to worry. Sometimes you don't want to use the same verbiage. In my class when doing this I have learned this is this is how I do it. Want to show what it was and how you did it. Very plain. You have to put elaborate words in there just beast plain and simple. So, somebody that's looking at his resume, you want to catch their eye like that. You want to be super simple. The more you write to these competencies, more you're going to open yourself to this position. I'm not a qualifications specialist. They are the ones that are going to say hey, Jane Doe meets this hiring authority send her down to San Diego. This is very important. It says KSA will always find it under how you will be evaluated. Under USAJobs there is a couple of things I always felt potential employees to look at. One is the duty of the position. You will adjust your resume for that. Even if you have a prior job and maybe did some of these things, use it. If you have these multiple times in resumes multiple times. It's going to get your resume -once we get a resume rate your resume. We get it a point factor. It will get you higher points. You get points of your interview and points on your resume. You also have points on assessment. Everything is five points. There is a baseline. Does anybody have questions on that?

>> Like I said, that KSA, if you are that last one, even though you are in school. Some people don't put that in date and that can sometimes cause issues on your resume.

>> What if there are gaps?

>> Gaps are fine as long as you meeting the competency you will be okay. People have gaps in employment. I will not hurt you at all. We don't even question that.

>> Transcripts, we definitely need your transcripts. That's why we said if you're waiting until June after everybody has graduated because you're going to want to have your transcripts. It has a lot of writing. We need everything to be read not just once, twice but three times. Make sure you answer every question that you dolling your eyes and crossing your tease. You are submitting everything they asked for. If you don't have one piece of paper that they asked for, there is no going back. There is no I forgot this in its closed. There is no, I can submit it later. You are already disqualified. If you're a veteran you need your DD-214. This is listed on documents required under USAJobs. This is for current federal employees. The 306 is required through the question if you're in a federal employee. Have you been arrested of any crimes? Convicted. Have you been convicted? Have you ever been fired? These questions are for the initial -if you get hired we ask you to revisit these questions. These are for your background check. I tell people always be honest on this. Say you did get fired from a position and it is not in the last seven years. When you actually get hired when they have your background check they will find everything out from 15-20 years ago. I tell people to be truthful on this because it will be found in the background check. The level of investigation is pretty high. We do get full background clearance. The VRA scheduling and the hiring authority scheduling, that is if you are nonveteran, definitely schedule it. anything found is a disability go get it scheduled.

>> On USAJobs on the topic of applying will time out on you?

>> It will save as you go.

My recommendation to everybody who's possibly thinking of applying for a VA position is to go create your USAJobs. Look for announcements that are already out there. Read what is required. Get all of the information ready. Those resume now. Upload your resume. When that link does go live, whether you're putting it in your transcript or whatever and you are submitting. There are times the there are positions that we do have a limit and we say this job is going to close after we have hundred 50 applicants. Because we will have so many people competing for these positions. People have their stuff ready. But the best thing you can do. Go without a BRC announcement. Get yourself ready and rare resume. Take a break from it and go back and make sure you have written to those contacts.

>> I recommend you write resume on a Word document. Then you go to do a resume builder, cut and paste your answers.

>> I was actually going to say that.

>> If you do the resume builder, do that.

>> I personally write my resume on a Word document and then upload that Word document. I have a hard time with the resume builder because it's always contingent on whether it will time out. I don't want to lose information. I just want to be able to focus on the resume and get it all written. Most places one a two page resume. My resume at USAJobs is probably 15 pages. [laughter]

>> That the government thing.

>> Don't worry if you're putting too much information. The more the better.

>> Less is not more.

>> Show how you do it and given outcome. Go to OPM .gov and look at the performance piece of the question. Practice those. Don't be afraid to write the questions down. This is the stuff that HR and everybody that's applying for the job - we cannot give you feedback on resume. That's not something that's legal on our part. We can't give one personal preference over another. Everything that we do to everybody has to be fair.

>> Resume builder it's good to know they look are looking for for a federal resume but I recommend putting resume on resume builder. Quickly going back to the fact that there is no reason if you're interested to know story of looting the stuff now and getting it written and ready to go. No Geneva talked about a couple postings but what I learned in this position is things change. I don't want any of you to be banking on something. If you are interested in employment and you see a posting ask at the time because things to change. Our best intentions are to have a posting coming at you at the beginning of July but I don't know factually that that will happen. If they do happen be aware of it that you will receive those emails.

>>. [voice low]

>> That's why we are waiting until mid June.

>> It takes a while to get the degree conferred off the transcript.

>> When degrees get conferred?

>> When I graduated it seemed like it was July. The grades are up and posted, but the actual degree conferred may take a while. I know Karen saxes written letters to different people.

>> I have heard it takes about four weeks.

>> That something that we will not back pocket.

We definitely do want that -thus we are here for to have the eligibility for the graduates to apply for these positions. Maybe that's something we can look into talk about. You can also go to USAJobs and have it alert you when you're building your profile. If the job announcement says vocational rehab counselor you will get any alerts that it job opening that is highly recommended.

>> You can email the job was posted and if you're interested and you'll get that information that a job is posted. I highly recommend that.

>> Another question from online. Can you speak with the Department of Labor jobs that work with the VA. [voice low]?

>> Currently we work with disabled veteran outreach program specialists. The help our veterans both of the initial phase and ending phase. They help guide them as well. And then support them in the employment phase. I'm not sure if I understood the question?

>> If they can't qualify as a VA right now is there somewhere else?

>> I think for folks that are not qualified to work for the VA. [voice low]

>> That's right, disabled veteran outreach program specialists. You should reach out to them and they can help you from the development department. Other questions? I know we went over our time a bit we are okay.

>> That clock is a little fast.

>> Okay. It was definitely a pleasure speaking to all of you. We look forward to speaking to some you in the future. It is a rewarding job. I absolutely feel good about the work I do every day. Like I said, I might not work with all the work that's being done with the decisions I have made it made a big impact. I find it very rewarding job. We have veterans who are very easy to work with and appreciate everything we do, but the real treasure comes from those individuals who walk in the door with a chip on the shoulder and aren't sure how you will help them. And then getting them into transition and see the success stories. It is extremely rewarding. The work that we do. It's an honor to work with our veterans. They served us and we get the opportunity to serve them. I could not be happier. For what I got my Master's degree in, I'm exactly where I wanted to be. It's a very good position. I highly encourage you guys if you're interested to let us know. We look forward to seeing resume.

>> One more question. Are you aware of the hiring in San Diego?

>> Now is the time. VOC we have always been under a rock for a long time. We all lifted the restriction. I spoke earlier in the presentation about the fact that it is really with see a VOC rehab position post. If you want to work for the VA you need to probably move to find that position. Across the country they are trying to get counselors of the caseload of 125 or more. That whole country has been looking for VOC rehab counselors. The state of California has the highest need. California has been hiring. Oakland has hired quite a few Counselors. They hired 19. We also hired 19 VOC rehab counselors. When I got hired there were two of us. In five years before they had another one. Felt very lucky to get a job as a VOC rehab counselor. Right now, is the time. Once we fill those positions I don't know what it will look like the future, but right now it's a really good time to be a VOC rehab counselor.

>> Chuck says you did an awesome job.

>> Thank you, we are sorry you missed you.

>> Work on those resumes! [end of session]

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