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US Department of Labor announces ‘Stand Down’ grants to assist about 10,000 homeless veterans

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service today announced the availability of \$600,000 in “Stand Down” grants that will provide an estimated 10,000 homeless veterans with opportunities to reintegrate into society. The grants are being awarded under the department’s Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program.

“Stand Down events across the country will reach thousands of homeless veterans – including homeless female veterans – with opportunities to re-enter America’s workforce,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, who is also chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. “Through these grants, the federal government will engage states and local communities as active partners in readying those who have served our nation for civilian jobs.”

Stand Down is a military term referring to a brief respite from combat. Stand Down community events are held by local organizations that provide veterans with a wide range of social services such as food, clothing, shelter, housing and employment assistance. In 2010, more than 160 organizations across the country partnered with local businesses, government agencies, and community and faith-based service providers to hold 81 Stand Down events for homeless veterans and their families.

Stand Down grant funds must be used to enhance employment and training opportunities or to promote the self-sufficiency of homeless veterans through paid work. Homeless individuals do not always have access to the basic supplies necessary to maintain their health and self-confidence. In addition, a lack of shelter and related resources often limits the ability of people who are homeless to prepare for job interviews, make a positive impression on prospective employers or be contacted for follow-up. Basic services such as showers, haircuts, attention to health concerns and other collaborative services provided at Stand Down events can improve participants’ chances of connecting with community-based service providers, and securing and maintaining employment.

Grantees operating within the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program network will sponsor Stand Down events by coordinating their efforts with various local, state and federal service providers. Applications for Stand Down grants will be accepted from state workforce agencies, state and local workforce investment boards, veterans service organizations, local public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations. For more information, contact Ken Fenner at Fenner.Kenneth@dol.gov or 202-693-4728.

A solicitation for grant applications will be published in the March 10 edition of the *Federal Register*. It also may be viewed at <http://s.dol.gov/D9>.

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