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Operation Secure Job: Continued Support for Veteran Jobseekers

Finding a job can be a daunting task. Many jobseekers don't know where to begin. Some get started, but then get lost in the process. It's easy to get confused in the details, become frustrated and give up.

The TVC employment staff at The WorkSource - Greenspoint center in Houston are dedicated to making sure veteran jobseekers don't stop until they land the job they want. In an effort to provide extensive support to those jobseekers, the staff created Operation Secure Job, an exclusive job club just for veteran jobseekers. After nearly a year of planning, Operation Secure Job kicked off in mid-January. The group meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month and all veteran jobseekers are encouraged to attend. There's no application or paperwork to sort through, a veteran simply needs to show up and participate in the twice-monthly activities.

Allan Perkins, local veterans' employment representative, said his staff is always looking for new and creative ways to contact veterans. Operation Secure Job allows Perkins and his fellow staff members to provide continued support to veterans throughout their job search. At each meeting, all participants introduce themselves by giving their "elevator resume." The elevator resume is a one to two minute introduction of members, the type of work they are looking for and the unique qualities they can bring to an employer.

Through this process, the employment staff instructs members that they never know when they may meet their next employer and to always be prepared. After introductions, the group recognizes the "victors" in the meeting, those veterans who have been hired on a new job or who had an interview after a long job search. Each victor is cheered and applauded, which offers positive reinforcement to all veterans in attendance. In addition to the celebration, each meeting features various guest speakers, such as employers, professional service officers, specialists in resume preparation, interviewing or other important job search skills.

Notable guest speakers to date include Earl Conley, human resources manager for Securitas in Houston and Wolf Biedenfeld, veterans' counselor for the Texas Veterans Commission claims program. The guest speakers, particularly the employers, provide an opportunity for the members to improve their job search efforts and ultimately give them an advantage on the competition for valuable jobs.

"We learn a lot more listening to employers and seeing what they really expect on a resume or in an interview," said participant Tommy Gilmore. James McCall adds, "Getting a professional to talk to, I can work out mistakes and fine tune my techniques without fear of blowing a possible job." Though just beginning, Operation Secure Job has the potential to be an outstanding support group for veteran jobseekers.

"It's just one more tool in our effort to get every Texas veteran gainfully employed," said Perkins.