

Discussant Comments
“Entries and Exits: Contrasting Pathways to Community Reentry”
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The following points were presented in response to the *Minnesota Exits and Entries* project and about two Ohio programs: the Ohio Transition Assistance Program (OTAP) and Successful Transition of Incarcerated Veterans to Employment (STRIVE) program.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Veterans Service Unit has always seen the need for transitional services for veteran returning from military service. The Ohio Transition Assistance Program (OTAP) provides a job search seminar, which includes

- An assessment of skills and abilities;
- Instruction on preparing a career catalogue;
- Learning to complete an employment applications from the employer’s point of view;
- Assistance in preparing a resumes to highlight employer requested qualifications;
- Instruction on transferring military training and experience into civilian terms;
- Participation in a mock interview with an employer to determine good and bad interview traits;
- Information on services provided by other agencies or organizations.

We soon realized that reentry from the military and reentry from prison were very similar. The objective of each reentry scenario is to secure employment, an important fundamental to the reentry process, whether from the military or prison.

ODJFS joined forces with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to implement the Successful Transition of Incarcerated Veterans to Employment or STRIVE Program.

As part of the program, ODRC identifies veterans who are 60 days from release, signs them up for the STRIVE Video Conference, and provides a listing and resumes to ODJFS. ODRC and ODJFS conduct a monthly video conference to gather information. ODJFS links the incarcerated veteran with a Veteran Intensive Service Coordinator (VISC) in the county to which the incarcerated veteran is returning. The VISC writes a letter of introduction to the incarcerated veteran that contains the VISC’s name, office name and location, and phone number. The incarcerated veteran is encouraged to correspond with the VISC for employment information before release and to immediately contact the VISC upon release.

For the Fiscal year July 1, 2007 thru June 30, 2008 sixty-six incarcerated veterans were interviewed via video conference and forty-six or 70% have contacted the VISC upon release. Of those forty-six, twenty-five or 54% have entered employment.