Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program provides vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with a wide range of psychosocial concerns, including mental illness, physical impairments, homelessness and any combination thereof. Veterans are provided with ongoing support services to obtain and maintain employment, as well as referrals to appropriate agencies that can improve their job search experience and provide benefits counseling. The goal of the program is long-term, competitive employment.

Using an individualized, person-centered approach, CWT helps participants improve the quality of their lives in at least five major areas:

- Development of positive work habits and attitudes
- Gaining a sense of purpose through productive employment
- Healthy living and stability in mental health status
- Community re-integration through maintaining independent living and improving social skills
- Minimizing reliance on institutional care

For more information, please contact Lina Denny at (650) 493-5000, ext. 22211 or lina.denny@va.gov.

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Thank you for your interest in the Compensated Work Therapy Program. The CWT Program serves the San Francisco Peninsula and South Bay regions, and is dedicated to helping participants improve the quality of their lives through vocational rehabilitation. Its sub-programs include:

- **The Transitional Work (TW) Program**: A transitional work therapy program that emphasizes employment planning, coordination, and development. TW provides qualifying Veteran patients a time-limited, therapeutic work assignment with a goal of obtaining competitive employment.
- **The Community-Based Employment Services (CBES) Program**: Veterans who have a medical/mental health diagnosis, are homeless, or have other barriers to employment are assisted in obtaining competitive employment and are provided with support services.
- **The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Program**: Veterans who are diagnosed with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) are assisted in obtaining competitive employment and are provided with individualized support services to maintain employment.

In order to submit a completed consult, please ensure the following can be accounted for:

1) Complete a new consult entitled “Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Outpt.” Any VA provider can place his/her name under “Entered by,” but a provider with medical privileges MUST be the “Responsible Person,” thus his/her signature is required. Providers with medical privileges include Primary Care Physicians (PCPs), Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers and select Nurse Practitioners (NPs).

2) The CWT Medical Clearance template is completed by the Veteran’s PCP or NP. This can be found in the “Notes” tab as a “New note” titled, “CWT Medical Clearance 22685.” The note documents any limitations that may impact the selection of a work assignment. This MUST be submitted for the consult to be complete.
   - The CWT Medical Clearance note must be completed PRIOR to placement in the TW Program. To expedite the process it is strongly suggested that Veterans obtain clearance prior to consult being placed. It is also strongly suggested that Veterans obtain medical clearance prior to intake in the CBES and IPS Programs.
   - If Veterans do not have a PCP, Social Workers can facilitate a connection to one. During this time, they can contact CWT Psychologist/Clinical Coordinator Nana Dawson-Andoh, Ph.D, at ext. 27821 or nana.dawson-andoh@va.gov. Dr. Dawson-Andoh will triage Veterans for vocational assistance and a brief orientation with a CWT staff member while they await assignment of a PCP and consult completion.

3) Veteran has a Mental Health Treatment Coordinator, if being followed for mental health treatment. If Veteran does not have one, Social Workers are encouraged to help arrange for Veteran to meet with one before referring them to CWT.

Once a completed consult is received, Dr. Dawson-Andoh will review the chart and triage the Veteran for assignment to a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist.

If it is unclear which program may be most appropriate for the Veteran, he/she will be triaged to the treatment team for further review and discussion of clinically appropriate programs or community resources.
Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) - An Overview

The Department of Veteran Affairs’ (VA) Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program provides vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with a wide range of psychosocial concerns. These include mental illness, physical impairments, homelessness and any combination thereof. Veterans are provided with on-going support services as well as referrals to appropriate agencies for information on how employment will affect their current benefits.

Through distinct programming, CWT is dedicated to using an individualized, person-centered approach to help participants improve the quality of their lives in at least five major areas:

- Development of positive work habits and attitudes
- Gaining a sense of purpose through productive employment
- Healthy living and stability in mental health status
- Community re-integration through maintaining independent living and improving social skills
- Minimizing reliance on institutional care

CWT consists of five sub-programs: Transitional Work, Community-Based Employment Services, Individual Placement and Support, Transitional Residence and Supported Education.

Transitional Work (TW)

TW participants are screened by program staff and matched to a temporary work assignment at the local VA Medical Center or in the community, as clinically appropriate. Veterans enrolled in the TW program are not employees of the VA or of any participating company, and thus do not receive any of the traditional employee benefits. TW participants actively engage in job searches while in the program, with the goal of securing competitive employment at or before discharge.

Community-Based Employment Services (CBES)

The CBES Program emphasizes rapid placement of veterans into competitive employment in the community. CBES serves veterans with medical and/or mental disabilities including traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, mental illness, and polytrauma, as well as veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Job developers continue working with clients after job placement in order to assist veterans in maintaining employment.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

Much like the CBES Program, IPS also emphasizes rapid placement of veterans into community-based, competitive jobs, but IPS provides these services specifically for participants with a diagnosis of severe mental illness (SMI). Case managers from IPS will continue to provide on-site support services to veterans after they have been placed in competitive employment for as long as is clinically indicated.

Transitional Residence (TR)

The TR Program is a 10-bed community-based, residential program in the city of Menlo Park. The program provides a structured therapeutic environment in which veterans participate in vocational rehabilitation activities at least thirty (30) hours per week. Participants in TR must meet all the criteria for the CWT program and be able to pay program fees. Maximum time for TR is one year.

While in the program, a case manager will collaborate with veterans on securing permanent housing and competitive employment, as well as life skills such as money management, time management, leisure activities, social and hygiene skills, health and wellness.

Supported Education (Supp.Ed.)

Supported Education provides case managed, recovery-oriented educational assistance services to veterans who wish to pursue educational opportunities. The program will provide veterans with information on how to access and utilize available educational benefits, as well as assistance with applying to schools and connecting with counselors. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in another CWT component to participate in SuppEd.

www.paloalto.va.gov/services/cwtprogram.asp