

Association of VA Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals

Dept. of Veterans Affairs

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MyCareer@VA Overview.

How to Advance Your Career at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

My Career@VA is an interactive, user friendly website that assists with vocational and educational development by empowering the user to create a custom plan for their career advancement. The user is able to utilize self-help tools, website interface options, as well as other tools that guide and direct the individual.

Some of the tools included are “My Career Toolkit”, “Career Planning Process”, “Career Training Sessions”, “Finding the Right Job”, and “Video Demonstrations”, just to name a few. These are all personalized skill and vocational tools which provide a comprehensive view of development that is needed; to include future knowledge, skills and abilities, education requirements, as well as other related experience.

As Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist wishing to expand my career, I would utilize the “My Selected Career Path” located in the Toolkit. Here the job title “Staff Assistant”, GS10-12 presented itself. So if I was interested in this path, I would continue to exam the competencies, education, additional information, current openings and VA employment with this position. In this section, it goes into great detail and links you to other opportunities and tools. This website is very user friendly, and self-explanatory. The site truly assists with career research and development, no matter what level you are presently at. Submitted by Justin Gallagher.

About The Association of VA Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals.

AVAVRP advocates for the recruitment, retention, and recognition of Vocational Rehabilitation professionals of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).



Mission statement

AVAVRP is focused on the professional development of Voc Rehab Professionals which interact with today's veteran. The AVAVRP shapes and influences the future of the VA profession through networking, creating opportunities, and promoting further development through formal and informal education.



Meet Our Executive Committee.

Rob Dennis, Ph.D., CRC

Rob Dennis currently serves as a supervisor of the TSES program at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio. He is founder and president of the Association of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals (AVAVRP), and is a member of the VISN 10 2014 Leadership Development Institute (LDI). Dr. Dennis is a published author of the "Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument," and holds a copyright to this instrument. He taught courses for several years at Wilberforce University in rehabilitation counseling. He is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Social Worker, and a Certified Case Manager.

Dr. Dennis is a published author of such works as "Development of the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument," "A factor analysis of Page and Wong's servant leadership instrument," and has had two chapters on leadership theory and servant leadership instrument development published in an MBA Textbook in both Russian and English translation. In addition, he has a chapter in the following book, *Servant Leadership - Developments in Theory and Research*, October 2010. Edited by Dirk van Dierendonck and Kathleen Patterson. PART V: STUDYING SERVANT LEADERSHIP: The Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument: A Model-based Measurement Instrument; R.Dennis, L.Kinzler-Norheim & M.C.Bocarnea. Moreover, he was a co-author on unpublished paper to annual Appalachian Seminar in Eastern KY University, Better Serving Veterans in Ohio Appalachia: Using the Mountain Model to Develop Cultural Competency with Healthcare Professionals and Reduce Healthcare Disparities. Peterson, F. Williams, M., Resch, W., Thull, J. Dennis, R. (March 13, 2011).

He has also presented at conferences and or seminars, and had a paper accepted at the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Dennis's research interests include servant leadership, instrument development, consumer satisfaction, and disabilities and vocational rehabilitation.



AVAVRP is actively advocating for improved professional recognition and promotional opportunities for VA Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals. Our organization currently has 39 members. Encourage your friends and coworkers to join. An increase in membership reinforces strength in numbers to continue our mission of increasing opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation professionals.

Join AVARP at : <http://www.avavrp.org>



Congratulations and Farewell!!

The AVAVRP Executive Committee extends a congratulations and a fond farewell to Dr. Shana Bakken-Gillen. Dr. Bakken-Gillen was hired as the VHA Director of Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services. She served as the AVARP Nominations Chairperson. Thank you for all you have done for AVAVRE.

AVAVRP Executive Committee

Elected Officers

President: Rob Dennis

Vice President: President Elect Robert Lamar

Secretary: Laci Paluck

Treasurer: Shelley Rahn

Nominations Chairperson- Vacant

Members at Large: Kevin Costa
Justin Gallagher
David Teshiera

Appointed Members

Congressional Liaison: Dawn Hale

Website Manager: Michael McGree

Newsletter Editor: Anna Sabina-Stratton

Special Projects-Conference Chairperson:
Kathryn Kraut-Petruccione

**THE NEXT AVARP NEWSLETTER WILL BE
PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 2015. SENT YOUR
ARTICLES TO: anna.sabina-stratton@va.gov**



Meet Our Executive Committee

Robert Lamar, Vice President/President Elect

Robert Lamar works as a as a Lead Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist and Trainer at the VA Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama.



Robert

Served in the US Navy from 9/73-9/76

Why did you volunteer to become involved with AVAVRP?

I volunteered to join this organization because it's new and it will in the future assist and address issues and concerns of people in this field. Also, because I like being a part of building something from nothing.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The biggest challenge in my current position is to get potential employers to hire veterans with felonies, companies in my area dislike hiring people in general who has committed crimes against humans and crimes involving thefts like

embezzlement, robbery, breaking and entering. Some employers don't like hiring people with petty larceny charges as well because they say that's stealing which it is.

So, when I speak to a potential employer on a veterans behalf who has a storied legal history, I am afforded the issuance of federally insured bonds of \$25,000 if a company hires such a veteran, I can also offer tax incentives of up to \$26,000 for veterans with felonies and veterans with disabilities. If those offers don't work, then I use old fashion persuasion.

What do you like best about your current position?

I enjoy working with the population that I work with and I get a joy from assisting a person goes from the bottom to the top. I use all avenues available in order to accomplish our goal. So, those are the resolutions that I use most often.

What do you do to balance your home and work life and manage stress?

The strategies I use to de-stress at home is I listen to , write music and play smooth jazz and gospel music, at work for some reason I don't get stressed and I suppose I may sometimes and only hits me as I leave for home. I know that sound s strange but that's the way it is.

What is your educational background?

I attended Birmingham Southern College in Birmingham, Alabama where I studied Business Administration. I later obtained a BS in Criminal Justice with a human services; drug abuse, family individual counseling etc.

Robert is presently studying for a Master's degree in human services.

