

# Exploring Transportation, Employment, Housing, and Location Issues for New Jersey Veterans with Disability

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Many veterans leave military service ready to rejoin civilian life, possessing the resources to meet the

challenges of this major life event. Some, however, are not so fortunate and must cope with long-term or permanent physical and/or mental disability that affects their ability to work, maintain households, and engage in civilian life. These working-age veterans with disability face the daunting tasks of securing housing, finding work, and meeting health care needs while managing their disabilities. Transportation connects these disparate parts of daily living and should be included in any reintegration effort but often is not considered. Addressing transportation issues late in the process, or underestimating the vital role transportation has, can impair veterans' ability to adapt to civilian life. This report explores the intersection among transportation, housing, and employment to successful veteran reintegration. Further, the study examines whether transit-oriented development (TOD) might provide a viable option for veterans with disability to help meet their post-service needs.

**For working-age veterans with disability, transportation is the lynchpin to meeting daily living needs—employment, housing, medical care access, and education.**

## Study Methods

The researchers conducted structured interviews with local, state, and federal agencies, non-profit housing providers, and others who advocate for veterans. Attention was given to interview those who assist working-age veterans with disability. In total, 21 individuals at 15 organizations from four states were interviewed. The researchers also sought input from veterans directly through focus group interactions to learn of their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of transportation, housing, and employment needs and how their ability to meet those needs affected their reintegration. The researchers explored participant familiarity with and thoughts on TOD and how it could help to meet the diverse needs of veterans.

## Findings

The researchers found that veteran reintegration is daunting for all and can easily be overwhelming without appropriate information and supports. Veterans with service-related disabilities face even more obstacles. Findings from both the interview and the focus group tasks demonstrated the vital role transportation has in veteran reintegration. The common sentiment was that transportation is the lynchpin to meeting daily living needs—employment, housing, medical care access, and education opportunity. Transportation's critical role in facilitating reconnection with family, friends, and community was shared by all.



Veterans Manor,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Interviewees involved with permanent supportive housing reported that transportation was a major consideration in siting their respective projects and that public transportation contributed to the success of their residents, including their ability to sustain employment. Most interviewees and focus group participants supported the idea of basing permanent supportive housing sites on a TOD model.



**Veterans at Study Focus Group**

### **Policy Recommendations**

The researchers anticipate that knowledge gained from this study will be used to advance strategies to address and ameliorate reintegration obstacles faced by veterans with disability related to the nexus of housing, employment, and transportation. Among the report's recommendations are:

- Create a one-stop resource center to support veterans' reintegration to guide a veteran through the discharge process and continue to provide consistent support from a single point of contact for the extended transition period
- Establish an exploratory task force at the state level to discuss holistic approaches to veteran housing that can support housing, employment, and transportation needs
- Work to foster a more informed dialogue within the state and throughout the nation about the need to pursue holistic approaches to serve veterans seeking reintegration
- Pursue additional research on the transportation and siting characteristics of successful veteran TOD

### **About the Authors**

Stephanie DiPetrillo and Andrea Lubin are senior research associates at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University's Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy.

### **To Learn More**

For more details about the study, download the full report at [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1144.html](https://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1144.html)