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ISP News



## Telework Part 4: Jobs for Disabled Veterans

This is a cause that every ISP is in favor of, and one woman is setting up an organization to do the right thing.

by **Alex Goldman**

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Jefferson, N.J.-based [CORA Works](#) (CORA stands for Creating Opportunities by Recognizing Abilities) is led by Ilene Morris-Sambur, a former turnaround consultant who wants to give something back to America.

In her previous job, which she held for 20 years, she helped companies reduce costs. She was independent for the first 12 years and subcontracted with [Carl Marks Consulting Group](#) for the final 8 years.

"There was a lot of international travel. I was home two days each month. I decided to reassess where I was going in life. It took a year to come up with this concept."

One of the company's first customers was [PR Newswire](#), which has provided CORA with [many testimonials](#).

### Everybody wants to help, so please cooperate

Numerous organizations are trying to help disabled veterans, but aren't working together as well as they could, Morris-Sambur says. She's started working with several of these organizations, such as the [Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network](#) (EARN).

"We found that people with disabilities were serious and dedicated."

The Department of Labor has a program called [Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines](#) (REALifelines), which helped Morris-Sambur contact the military.

"Our Pilot Program at PR Newswire was extremely successful," she says. The company had not been pursuing accounts receivable in cases where the balances were too small. "I asked if we could do telework, initially

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employing seniors and work-at-home mothers then gradually adding disabled veterans and military spouses to our staff. In 9 months, we recovered \$1.5 million. We're specializing in business to business first party soft collections, accounting, administration, and call centers."

### An evolving model

Key to the success of the program, Morris-Sambur says, is mentoring people who are capable of work but lack self-confidence. "These people are so beaten down. They don't think they can do it, but they are so capable!"

Staff stay with a client company for 6 months after the telework program is initiated, building a mentoring program with mental health counselors, team leaders and client staff. Staff and their mentors can use IM, VoIP, or any other technology.

It's important that a mentor be available. "We always have someone on the line available for questions and support, for constant reassurance," says Morris-Sambur. "CORA's long term objective is for the employers to hire those people who have proven their abilities."

For disabled veterans, especially those in rural areas, she is concerned about mental health problems. "We want to add 24 x 7 mental health counseling, which is not necessarily available, especially in rural areas."

Veterans face any of several adjustments to civilian life. They may find that CORA is employing the spouse, who is now the breadwinner—so that in addition to losing a limb, the veteran changes from being the breadwinner to being a dependant. Or the veteran may find it difficult to make the change from a prestigious job, perhaps with command responsibilities, to work that commands less respect.

It's about helping people help themselves, offering training and work. "We have a program at the Walter Reed Hospital for training and placing disabled veterans and military spouses in telework positions. Once it's proven effective, we hope to roll it out to other military hospitals."

While CORA now focuses on work with disabled veterans, military spouses, and individuals with disabilities, the company is also providing employment opportunities for young, unskilled workers and for seniors.

There are people in America willing to work, discouraged workers who believe there are no jobs. "We're also trying to bring offshore jobs back onshore," says Morris-Sambur.

There's plenty of good work to do.

— End

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