

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT,
TRAINING, AND EMPLOYER OUTREACH (ACVETEO)

2016 Final Report

December 31, 2016

CONTENTS

Letter from the Chair.....3

PART I

Executive Summary.....4

PART II

Summary of Recommendations.....5

PART III

Recommendations and Rational by Specific Area.....6

A. Barriers to Employment

B. Transition Assistance and Training Support

C. Direct Services

PART IV

Appendix, Membership Profiles.....18

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
Washington, DC 20210

December 31, 2016

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez, Secretary
U.S Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210

Secretary Perez:

On behalf of the members of the Department of Labor Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO), it is my honor to present to you our committee's 2016 report. ACVETEO's obligation is to serve as your subject matter experts in assessing the employment and training needs of our transitioning service members, veterans, and certain eligible dependents, advising you, your subordinate agencies, and Congress on the employment situation of the veterans' community and ways to ensure your Department's programs and services are meeting the needs of today's veterans. As your agency now seeks to transition power to a new Administration, it is our goal to ensure that you, your team, and your successors have all the tools that you need to ensure that the Department and its partners can continue to deliver quality service to our veterans.

The attached report contains the committee's recommendations, informed by the expertise of a diverse ACVETEO membership; your team in Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) and other Department of Labor services; government partners to include the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Small Business Administration; as well as other private and public partners with an interest in ensuring our veterans are afforded quality employment opportunities after military service.

Over the past year, our committee has sought to build on our 2015 report, making additional recommendations that focus on three areas of responsibility for the Department of Labor: Barriers to employment for veterans; transition and training resources; and direct services for veterans and employers. The ACVETEO members believe that not only will our recommendations serve to ensure continued innovation in the delivery of programs and services to veterans, but we also believe that our report can help serve as a road map for the new Administration.

I want you to know that we believe in the mission of ACVETEO and we thank you and your team at VETS for not only their dedication to helping this committee execute its responsibilities, but also working proactively to implement our past recommendations to consistently improve the programs and services available to our veterans. On behalf of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to serve our veterans through ACVETEO. We look forward to your feedback on this report and continuing our work in 2017.

Sincerely,

Ryan M. Gallucci
Chair, Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

PART I

Executive Summary

The Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO) was established in 2007 under the authority of Section 4110 of Title 38, U.S. Code. ACVETEO is a non-discretionary federal advisory committee and is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App.2.

ACVETEO consists of 16 members — a diverse group of veterans from each military branch, as well as the value-added experiences from civilian subject matter experts with extensive experience in employment policy, veterans' services, and workforce development. The committee receives extensive expert support not only from DOL, but also from a number of additional ex-officio members from Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, Small Business Administration, and Office of Personnel Management.

The 2016 report of ACVETEO provides 14 specific recommendations and supporting rationales to the Secretary of Labor and Congress to address concerns and issues relevant to federal employment and transition assistance for the military and veteran communities. To build on past iterations of ACVETEO, this year's report focused on three specific areas under the purview of the Department of Labor (DOL):

- Barriers to Employment
- Transition Assistance and Training Support
- Direct Services

This year's recommendations focus on improving DOL's ability to identify and address the employment challenges of subpopulations within the veterans community, improving the transitional training resources for veterans not just during the transition from military to civilian life, but at other transition points throughout their lives, and improving collaboration and information-sharing among government and non-government stakeholders responsible for providing direct services to veterans and certain eligible dependents.

ACVETEO's responsibilities are to assess employment and training needs of veterans and their integration into the workforce; determine the extent to which the programs and activities of the DOL are meeting such needs; assist the Assistant Secretary for Veteran' Employment and Training (ASVET) in conducting outreach to employers with respect to the training and skills of veterans and the advantages afforded employers by hiring veterans; make recommendations to the Secretary of Labor, through the ASVET, with respect to outreach activities and the employment and training needs of veterans; and carry out such other activities deemed necessary to making required reports and recommendations.

ACVETEO assesses the employment and training needs of the Nation's Veterans. Such needs may include transition assistance, protection of employment and reemployment rights, education, skills training, and integration into the workforce, among others, and assisting the ASVET in outreach activities to employers. ACVETEO is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness with which existing DOL programs deliver required services to America's Veterans and, where deficiencies are detected, to recommend appropriate remedial action.

PART II

Summary of Recommendations

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

1. Congress should take legislative action amending Title 38 to include paragraph (b) of Section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as it pertains to the definition of homeless veteran to include domestic violence and other life-threatening conditions.
2. The Department of Labor (DOL) should expand its outreach and education of those eligible for priority services to include active duty and reserve military spouses to address the staggering disparity in unemployment rates.
3. The Department should take action to expand the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program outreach/facilitation to include outreach to community-based organizations that provide the type of employment supports identified for veterans, women veterans, military spouses and caregivers, such as mental and physical health care, shelter, child care and transportation.
4. The Department should research opportunities to implement a methodology to identify and share lessons learned and effective practices between American Job Centers with consideration to women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans.
5. The Department should re-evaluate its definition of special veteran populations annually to ensure that the designation encompasses all appropriate veteran populations.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING SUPPORT:

6. The Department of Labor (DOL) should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholders to participate in DOL's Employment Workshop curriculum review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2017
7. VSOs and NGOs should review the existing Career Technical Training Track (CTTT) curriculum that will be administered and taught by Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in January 2017.
8. The Department should, in collaboration with its partner agencies makes recommendations on the functionality of a "TAP APP."
9. The Department in collaboration with the Small Business Administration (SBA) should investigate ways to improve how information is provided to small businesses about federal and state funding programs to include tax incentives available for them when they hire Veterans.

DIRECT SERVICES:

10. The Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) should provide staff skills training for the non-Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program funded workforce system staff who provide priority service to veterans.
11. VETS should facilitate positive outreach activities with the federal contractor community at the state and national levels to improve veteran hiring and retention for federal contractors.
12. Improve veterans' employment outcomes by increasing the number of job opportunities available to veterans and eligible spouses on state job banks and veterans.gov.
13. Improve coordination and visibility of Department-funded direct services for veterans by consistently engaging with four key stakeholder groups to drive veterans and employers to utilize such services.

PART III

Recommendations and Rationales by Specific Areas: Barriers to Employment, Transition Assistance & Training Support, and Direct Services

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

As both demonstrated in practice and informed by research, there is a clear danger with regard to failing to acknowledge inherent differences between the service-connected (and non-service-connected) experiences represented by different cohorts of the veterans' community; that is, specifically how those experiences might differently impact the process of transitioning from military to civilian life, and subsequent post-service employment. Put differently, it is the opinion of the committee that broad and sweeping generalizations with regard to the economic and employment concerns of the population – and strategies to impact those concerns – are inappropriate and limiting. To that end, the committee makes the following recommendations related to advancing insight – and ultimately advancing impactful service-delivery – in support of the employment situation veterans with disabilities, women veterans, Native American veterans and other veterans, reservists and military spouses with barriers to employment:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

It has been identified by the Committee that inconsistencies related to defining the 'eligible class' of beneficiaries, within and between federal legislation aimed at addressing chronic homelessness, has created a situation where veterans who could otherwise benefit from the supportive services authorized by the legislation, and legally excluded (deemed an 'ineligible class'). Accordingly, it is the recommendation of the ACVETEO that DOL should:

Congress should explore avenues to pursue legislative action amending Title 38 to include paragraph (b) of Section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as it pertains to the definition of homeless veteran.

Rationale:

In the Committee's 2014 Report, it offered the following recommendation:

“The Department should initiate a review of its broad programmatic flexibility to serve veterans with disabilities, women veterans and Native American veterans, via services and programs that reside outside of VETS (but within the Department). This review should take the form of a ‘gap analysis,’ considered in the context of the particular issues and challenges impacting the employment situation of veterans with disabilities, women veterans and Native American veterans. Instances where the review suggests that programmatic flexibility would be useful – but does not exist – should be considered for administrative or legislative action.”

Based on the Department's review stemming from the above cited recommendation (2014), the VETS leadership identified definitional inconsistencies within/between Title 38 and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which impact program eligibility in the case of some homeless veterans. Addressing these inconsistencies will ensure both consistent treatment of homeless veterans under the law, and expanded opportunity for veterans to receive supportive services in a way that aligns with the

legislative intent of Title 38 and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

It has been identified by the Committee that active duty and reserve military spouses face significant barriers to employment that result in higher than average unemployment rates. ACVETEO recommends that DOL take action to expand its education and outreach to increase the awareness that active duty and reserve military spouses qualify as dislocated workers to address the staggering disparity in unemployment rates.

Rationale:

It is the opinion of the ACVETEO that military spouses face significant barriers to employment. Current estimates for the unemployment rate for military spouses is up to 18 percent, compared to the national jobless rate of 4.9 percent (June 2016). In a study conducted by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (February 2014), military spouses were 3x's more likely than the national average to be unemployed. Furthermore the report state that military spouses, if employed, make 38 percent less than their civilian counterparts. PCS moves, licensing requirements, deployments and lack of opportunities can be blamed for such staggering statistics.¹

Synthesizing research from a series of studies on U.S. military families, the *Social Cost Analysis of the Unemployment and Underemployment of Military Spouses* found that adverse employment conditions among military spouses cost society approximately \$710 million to \$1.07 billion per year.² The Department of Labor has made great strides in redefining populations for priority of service to include eligible spouses and caregivers of veterans in 2014. It is recommended that the department take action to expand its education and outreach to increase the awareness that active duty and reserve military spouses qualify as dislocated workers to address the staggering disparity in unemployment rates.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

ACVETEO recognizes that the key to successful employment is eliminating all of the barriers to employment, including lack of supports like mental and physical health care, shelter, child care and transportation. It is recognized that the American Job Centers have an opportunity to collaborate with community service providers to create a list of employment support resources available to veterans, military spouses and caregivers that would be provided when employment barriers are identified during the initial assessment.

The Department of Labor should take action to expand the JVSG outreach/facilitation to include outreach to community-based organizations that provide the type of employment supports identified for veterans, women veterans, military spouses and caregivers, such as mental and physical health care, shelter, child care and transportation.

Rationale:

Training and employment guidance letter WIOA TEGL 3-15 Operating Guidance for the Workforce Innovation And Opportunity Act requires state workforce agencies to conduct an initial assessment of skill

¹ "Military Spouse Employment Report" Institute for Veterans and Military Families. February 2014.

² "Social Cost Analysis of the Unemployment and Underemployment of Military Spouses" Blue Star Families. April 2016

levels including literacy, numeracy and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs. Once the need for supportive services are identified, the agencies must provide information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)³; and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program.

With respect to the American Job Centers (AJC), the role of the local veterans' employment representatives (LVERs) is to perform outreach to employers, employer associations, and business groups to promote the advantages of hiring veterans. It is recommended that the Department of Labor expand the JVSG outreach/facilitation expand to include outreach to community-based organizations that provide the type of supportive services identified for veterans, women, military spouses and caregivers, such as mental and physical health care, shelter, child care and transportation.

The local supportive services identified by JVSG can be shared within the AJC Through an expanded definition of case management, the personnel within the AJCs can provide information about available resources to mitigate all barriers to employment and prepare the veteran, military spouse and caregiver for successful employment.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The committee recognizes that the performance of American Job Centers varies between communities based on the resources available, the experience of staff and the region that is being served. American Job Centers are responding to the needs of their community and developing effective practices to address barriers to employment. However, the ability to share experiences, lessons learned and effective practices, with consideration to women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans, is not currently available between centers. It is recommended that DOL VETS research opportunities and capitalize on current initiatives to implement a methodology to identify and share lessons learned and effective practices between centers.

Rationale:

By sharing effective practices, American Job Centers can learn what is working in other agencies and assess if the identified practice can be implemented in their own agency, saving time and resources trying to develop strategies that may already exist. Effective practices can improve the quality of services offered to veterans based on gender, veterans who are disabled, military spouses and caregivers, increase the productivity and efficiencies of agencies, and identify and replace poor practices with proven strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

³ HUD Approved Housing Counseling Agencies, <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm>

The committee recognizes that the designation of a special veteran population currently includes women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans. In order to maintain an accurate reflection of the populations that require a special population designation, the Department of Labor should, in consultation with key stakeholders, re-evaluate its definition of special veteran populations annually to ensure that the designation encompasses all appropriate veteran populations.

Rationale:

It is recognized that the demographics of veterans and the barriers that veterans face evolve over time. The committee recognizes the importance of defining the populations with significant barriers to employment accurately so that these veterans' populations earn the designation of a special population. It annually, in consultation with key stakeholders, to ensure that the designation encompasses all appropriate veteran populations.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE & TRAINING SUPPORT:

ACVETEO recognizes the impact of Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment Workshops and the valued participation of veterans' service organizations (VSOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders as their input added insights for improvements. On a similar note, ACVETEO also recognizes the tremendous progress with the TAP since the VOW to Hire Heroes Act was signed into law five years ago in November 2012. Along the progressive continuum, we support the ongoing implementation of the Military Life Cycle (MLC) model to include the continued efforts to integrate and market transition and employment information in support of MLC.

While there remains a vast array of online transition and employment resources, ACVETEO applauds DOL VETS' roll out and content of VETERANS.GOV. The site brings together job banks, state employment offices, American Job Centers, opportunities in top trending industry sectors, and employer assistance all in one online spot. VETERANS.GOV makes the employment search process easier for Veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses, as well as employers in the hiring process.

It is essential that the DOL Employment Workshop keeps pace with the changing dynamics of the job seeker and employment space. High quality, relevant curriculum is critical to the participant's experience in the effort to facilitate an effective and successful transition. ACVETEO is appreciative of DOL VETS actions in ensuring VSOs and other stakeholders' participation in the recent curriculum review; which led to a much-improved Employment Workshop. It is essential that stakeholders' participation be continued in DOL's Employment Workshop as well as other Transition GPS modules and optional curriculum training tracks to include the Career Technical Training Track.

ACVETEO envisions additional improvement opportunities for the Department such as the TAP curriculum program by marketing TAP information through a 24/7 worldwide accessible "TAP APP", and assisting small businesses in leveraging federal, state and local resources to facilitate Veteran employment.

With this in mind, the ACVETEO has made the following recommendations and supporting rationales to improve transitional resources for Veterans and their families, and to make it easier for small businesses to leverage resources to train and employ Veterans.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Department of Labor should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholders to participate in DOL's Employment Workshop curriculum review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2017.

Rationale:

It is essential that DOL's Employment Workshop continue to improve. Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) stakeholders, and employers participated in the FY16 curriculum review of the DOL Employment Workshop. Their significant contributions facilitated a much-improved Employment Workshop. In order to keep pace with the changing dynamics of the job seeker and employment space, VSOs, Employers and other stakeholders should continue to participate in the next DOL Employment Workshop curriculum review scheduled in Fiscal Year 2017.

A timeline for the FY17 curriculum review should be disseminated to stakeholders as soon as possible to solicit participants and to ensure sufficient time to review the existing curriculum and make relevant

recommendations. It is also recommended that participants receive the current DOL Employment Workshop Participant Guide and accompanying slide presentation, and attend an Employment Workshop prior to the curriculum review.

Continued collaboration between VSOs/NGOs/Employers and DOL (to include several agencies such as VETS, Women's Bureau, Office of Apprenticeship, ETA, etc) in the FY17 Employment Workshop curriculum review will leverage expertise in the Veteran employment space, develop unity of effort and common messaging, and facilitate improved and consistent service.

Curriculum review methods, timelines, and stakeholder lessons learned will establish procedures to support future reviews of Transition GPS modules and optional training tracks. DOL should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholders' participation in DOL's Employment Workshop curriculum review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2017.

1FY2015: ACVETEO Final Report Recommendation #5 and Interagency TAP Curriculum Working Group SOP

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Veterans service organizations (VSOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) should review the existing Career Technical Training Track (CTTT) curriculum that will be administered and taught by Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in January 2017.

Rationale:

The responsibility to administer and instruct the CTTT is being transferred from the VA to VETS in January 2017. The Department has the opportunity to improve the current curriculum and ensure it is complimentary to the Employment Workshop.

Employers want to hire Veterans but often times a Veteran does not have an industry recognized credential required by the employer. Effectively addressing this "skill gap" through training and education will lead to better employment outcomes for transitioning Service members, Veterans and their spouses.

Effectively addressing this skill gap has been a focus of the current administration as well as Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Transportation (DOT), VSOs and other stakeholders through Apprenticeship, Licensing and Credentialing initiatives which included:

- Investment of \$90 million to expand registered apprenticeships, the \$175 million American Initiative Grants to 46 public and private partnerships, as well as the VA's role in apprenticeships via the GI Bill benefits
- Recent allocation of \$7.5 million for grants to States to explore issues related to occupational licensing requirements and interstate portability of licenses as well as the ongoing two- year effort with the National Governor's Association to pilot portability with 6 states and 6 career fields
- American Legion's Credentialing Roundtable
- DOD programs to include United Services Military Apprenticeship Program, Skillbridge, US Army's Career Skills Program, the service's respective Credentialing Opportunities On Line (COOL) sites
- DOT's Military to Mariner Initiative

Service members have the opportunity to participate in one or more two-day tailored tracks within

Transition GPS curriculum to meet their personal career goals. The CTTT is for the transitioning Service members seeking industry-recognized credentials in shorter-term training programs. The CTTT addresses such topics as establishing career goals, identifying civilian occupations, researching credentialing and vocational training programs, and making a plan for pursuing a chosen career path.

It is essential that this important training track is reviewed by subject matter experts in the Veteran employment and training space. VSO and NGO participation and engagement in the Fiscal Year 2016 DOL Employment Workshop curriculum review led to a much improved Employment Workshop. As such, VSO, employers, trade unions, technical institutions, and relevant stakeholders should be invited to participate in a CTTT curriculum review in the near future. This curriculum review should be formalized and disseminated to all stakeholders. Collaboration between VSOs, NGOs, VETS, and VA in a CTTT curriculum review will leverage expertise in the community, develop unity of effort and common messaging, and facilitate improved and consistent service.

Curriculum review methods, timelines, and stakeholder lessons learned will establish procedures to support future reviews of Transition GPS modules and optional training tracks. DOL should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholder participation in DOL's Employment Workshop curriculum review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2017.

2Interagency TAP Curriculum Working Group SOP

3Veterans Licensing and Certification Demonstration. Final Report, 2015

RECOMMENDATION 8:

DOL should, in collaboration with its partner agencies makes recommendations on the functionality of a "TAP APP".

Rationale:

A "TAP APP" would provide TAP information and curriculum in a 24/7 worldwide accessible format to facilitate a broader reach to transitioning Service members, spouses and their families.

A "TAP APP" would be a useful tool to integrate and market transition and employment information in support of the Military Life Cycle Transition Model (which includes providing information during Initial Entry Level Training as well as follow-on and progressive Professional Military Education (PME) such as non-commissioned officer training and other training relevant to rank/grade and time in service.)

Smart Phone "APPs" support common consumer practices; especially those of Millennials who make up the majority of the military and family members. DOL should, in collaboration with its partner agencies, develop and implement a TAP mobile application or "TAP APP".

RECOMMENDATION 9:

The Department in collaboration with the Small Business Administration (SBA) should investigate ways to improve how information is provided to small businesses about federal and state funding programs and to include tax incentives available for them when they hire Veterans.

Rationale:

Employers want to hire Veterans but often times a Veteran does not have an industry recognized credential required by the employer. Many small businesses do not understand the process of leveraging the training resources at the American Job Centers to include grants. Compounding the challenge, many small businesses receive different and competing guidance by federal, state, and county representatives which

leads to frustration for both the small business owner and the veteran.

It is important that the Department in partnership with the State Workforce Agencies and the SBA explore virtual tools and other means in which to assist small businesses with understanding and navigating the procedures necessary to obtain local funding for training that leads to a required license or credential.

DIRECT SERVICES:

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provides a variety of direct services to veteran job-seekers and employers who seek to hire veterans. In an effort to best serve veterans and employers, DOL often relies on external partners to accomplish its mission such as partner federal agencies like the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, state workforce agencies, and veterans' service organizations. While U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicates that the veterans' employment situation has improved in recent years, DOL must ensure that it properly coordinates its internal and external stakeholder resources to ensure that veterans can identify credible employment opportunities and that employers can easily navigate programs and services designed to hire and retain quality veteran employees. The following recommendations from ACVETEO are intended to help DOL foster this kind of coordination to best serve the needs of the veterans' community.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) should jointly explore and pursue staff skills training for the non-Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) funded workforce system staff. Training will focus on the unique recruiting, hiring, and retention issues facing the workforce system's veteran customers receiving priority of service.

Rationale:

All services to the veteran job seeker must follow DOL VETS policy: DVOPs serve only veterans with a "Significant Barrier to Employment" or within a specific category defined by the Secretary as listed in VPLs 03-14, 03-14 Change One, 03-14 Change Two, 04-14 and 08-14, homeless veterans through 03-16, and any subsequent VPLs issued on this subject. LVERs do not provide services to individual veterans. Their role is one of outreach to the employer community and capacity building within the state's employment service delivery system. Priority of service applies to all one-stop center staff, therefore, all center staff is responsible for serving veterans.

Consequently, that means a substantial number of veterans, transitioning service members and eligible spouses using the publically-funded workforce system will be served by non-JVSG funded staff, including one-stop center partners.

Many of these individuals have never served in the military, and are unfamiliar with the military terminology, structures and experiences of the veteran. While some non-JVSG staff have received basic training offered by the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) on serving the veteran customer, most have not. Consequently, they might not understand military occupational specialties, ratings, Air Force specialty codes, or military rank. They are often ill-equipped to assist a veteran, transitioning service member or eligible spouse who needs help creating a civilian resume based on military experiences, or how to promote veterans to employers as exceptional employees with a strong work ethic, experienced in team work, and able to manage multiple priorities, oftentimes in dangerous situations.

Further, it is important current and future staff understand why all veterans are not automatically referred to the DVOP or LVER. Similarly, it is important they are also trained to understand the difference between "priority of service" and "veterans' preference." Finally, all system staff should also be trained on why it is

important to work with job opportunities received and marked as federal contractor jobs (whether in automated feeds or emails) in offering priority of service to their customers and valuable compliance services to the employer customer.

Funding for non-JVSG staff training can be made available through the JVSG grant, provided states have vetted this with DOL VETS administrators and then submitted their intention to use such funds through their annual plan.

Training these individuals – both front line staff, partners and management – will create better experiences for everyone. Staff will feel more confident in their skills and job responsibilities, and management will have a clearer understanding of how to best serve non-SBE veterans. Employers will benefit with more referrals to their job opportunities. Veterans, transitioning service members and eligible spouses will profit from knowledgeable staff who have a better understanding of their background and experiences, and can provide needed services and resources in accordance with their authorizing legislation.

Lastly, ensuring all staff have the necessary training to do their jobs will be reflected in performance metrics with potential increases in the entered employment and employment retention rates for veterans.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

VETS should facilitate positive outreach activities with the federal contractor community at the state and national levels. This should involve ensuring state workforce agencies are aware of and have access to lists of federal contractors with VEVRAA job listing obligations, as well as facilitating and leading DOL's and other federal agencies' in positive outreach to the federal contractor community.

Rationale:

Under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) of 1974, and according to relevant regulations (38 US Code § 4212), federal contractors and subcontractors receiving more than \$150,000 in federal contracts must list employment openings with the state workforce agency job bank or with the local employment service delivery system where the opening occurs. Further, such federal contractors and their subcontractors are required to conduct appropriate positive outreach and recruitment activities reasonably designed to effectively recruit protected veterans. Regulations go so far as to offer federal contractors a suggested list of stakeholders they can contact for veterans' outreach.

Based on the above, this large employer community has a focused interest in increasing their recruitment of veterans per VEVRAA and USDOL regulations and demonstrating positive outreach and recruitment activities. State workforce agencies have limited knowledge of the existence of federal contractors (and their downstream subcontractors) operating within their states, and their interactions have been limited primarily to job listings.

Federal agency outreach to such contractors has also traditionally been limited to contractors who are having difficulty meeting their regulatory goals. Reaching out to federal contractors in a remediation mode will not result in quality career opportunities for veterans or create an environment that encourages federal contractors to view workforce system services as a constructive partner in building their workforce.

In view of the current stronger veteran employment numbers, and in view of the above information, increased outreach to all federal contractors (even those who have met their goals) is recommended. Such outreach should aim to: facilitate better overall hiring and retention numbers, and familiarize federal contractors with the workforce system and all available partner services.

Importantly, outreach to this group of employers complements the workforce system's priority of service

requirement. VETS and other federal agencies should help facilitate the workforce system's access to a comprehensive database of federal contractors. The lack of such a database has been cited by states and locals as an ongoing barrier to successful outreach to the federal contractor community. Understanding that a comprehensive database might be the ultimate goal, a good database that is free to use, will be extremely helpful.

Having access to a list of contractor names, whether that list is complete or not – and regardless of whether they are hiring – would allow JVSG and non-JVSG staff increased outreach opportunities, a chance to conduct job development for job-seeking veterans, and the opportunity for employers to increase their veteran hires. All of these activities also demonstrate to employers that the state workforce agency is much more than the “unemployment office.”

VETS should also consider targeting outreach to federal contractors at the national level through the Regional Vets' Employment Coordinators (RVECs), and other strategies such as attending and speaking on behalf of the system at relevant federal contractor conferences, or providing federal and military agencies issuing contracts with information on the workforce system (for the purposes of sharing with their respective contractors).

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Improve veterans' employment outcomes by increasing the number of job opportunities available to veterans and eligible spouses on state job banks and USDOL's veterans.gov.

Rationale:

DOL should focus on increasing the number of job opportunities listed on state job banks and veterans.gov. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in August 2016, there were approximately 5.4 million jobs openings in the US economy. Capturing more of these job openings in real time will offer veterans, transitioning service members, and eligible spouses access to more opportunities that match their skills, abilities and interests after they leave the military.

DOL in general and VETs specifically (including through the work of the RVECs), should encourage employers who currently do not list their jobs openings with the workforce system to list such job opportunities on veterans.gov. To have their jobs appear on veterans.gov employers should be directed to either:

- 1) Register and list jobs directly in the state job bank of their choice, or
- 2) Request to have their corporate career websites scraped (or indexed) by the National Labor Exchange (NLx)* as described at <https://us.jobs/postajobpartner.asp?partner=dolvets>.

Because state job banks and DOL's veterans.gov are supported by the NLx, jobs listed in state job banks appear on veterans.gov and any jobs acquired at the national level through scraping are then shared with the relevant state job banks. For multi-state employers, the ease of use and efficiency of this process makes veterans.gov an ideal portal for veterans' employment.

USDOL should also lead other federal and military agencies encouraging them to direct employers interested in recruiting veterans to use the job listing resources described above. Finally, USDOL should explore other opportunities -- such as relevant field guidance, to encourage, facilitate, and incentivize the workforce system in increasing job bank listings or NLx indexing requests.

**A public – private partnership, the NLx is an initiative that “feeds” state and national government employment portals with a high quality, no-cost, daily electronic file of job opportunities collected*

exclusively from corporate career websites and state job banks. The initiative aggregates and links state and regional labor markets, creating a nationwide system of public labor exchange services.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

Improve coordination and visibility of Department of Labor-funded direct services for veterans by consistently engaging with four key stakeholder groups to drive veterans and employers to utilize such services. These stakeholder groups include: Department of Labor internal organizations like Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Employment Training Administration (ETA); federal agency partners like the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense; state workforce agencies; and community partners like Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and Military Service Organizations (MSOs).

Rationale:

In an era of declining resources, it only makes sense to share materials, information, and sometimes personnel. The trend should be for more collaborative partnerships that braid and blend resources, creating a stronger, more vibrant, and better product than anyone can accomplish working alone. This is the same model as the American Job Center, which integrates products and services from multiple sources to create a seamless experience for the customer. The customer does not care who gave them the information, they only care that they received the help and information they needed.

Unfortunately, over the years, business lines not only in the Department of Labor, but across the federal government, have become more insular, seeking to accomplish similar missions without proper coordination. This has also happened in the community space, where state, municipal, and non-government entities have sought to build new kinds of programs and services designed to serve similar needs. For veterans who would need to take advantage of these programs and services, this only creates confusion.

By continuing to regularly convene intra-agency working groups, Department of Labor will better understand the veterans' employment landscape and the resources the agency has available to address persistent challenges. The state workforce agencies must also remain a key partner in this effort, as state workforce systems are responsible for delivering many of these programs and service directly to the veterans and employers in their states.

To improve on this collaboration, the Department of Labor may need to create a mechanism for states to share messaging and new approaches to reaching veteran clients as well as employers so as to minimize duplication of effort. Interest in sharing promising practices is evidenced in multiple state workforce agency forums. State and local staff find sharing information on home-grown initiatives that have improved serves for stakeholders extremely valuable – particularly in a resource-constrained environment.

Outside of the Department of Labor, the Secretary should also convene interagency working groups among federal government partners like the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense to coordinate resources available to the federal government designed to serve veterans in the workforce. Critical to this discussion are non-government and local partners who can ensure that Department of Labor programs and services are communicated effectively to the various constituencies that can take advantage of direct service programs. Community organizations like VSOs and MSOs bring to bear considerable resources to communicate with populations of veterans and employers who may want to avail themselves of DOL-funded programs and services. These organizations have at their disposal a vast owned, earned, and social media marketplace that can amplify DOL messaging on direct services. Many of these organizations also have credibility within the community that they serve, meaning their constituencies are more likely to consume their information and take action on a message. Coordinating this effort can ensure maximum exposure of a message to an

audience that needs it most.

Moreover, many VSOs and MSOs deliver direct services to veterans, helping their clients navigate Department of Veterans Affairs benefit programs. Unfortunately, many veterans who seek out these services are never referred to American Job Centers for further assistance. State workforce staff also report that VA does not facilitate a warm hand-off to American Job Center resources.

These are all opportunities the Department of Labor can proactively address through improved coordination and collaboration, ensuring maximum reach of DOL-funded direct service programs to the veterans who need them most, and employers who seek to hire and retain quality veteran employees.

While the Department of Labor has demonstrated significant progress in coordinating its internal resources and information-sharing among external stakeholders, these collaborations must include deliverables for the parties involved. While information exchange is important, collaborations must result in quantifiable actions that drive veterans and employers to engage with the workforce system.

PART IV
Appendix

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Appointed members:

J. Michael Haynie, PhD
Barnes Professor of Entrepreneurship, Whitman School of Management Syracuse University
Recognized Authority (Business)

Lois A. Bethards
Executive Director, American Indian Center of Arkansas
Recognized Authority (Business)

Jon Jukuri
National Conference of State Legislatures
Recognized Authority (Business)

Shirley Quarles, EdD, Retired COL, Army (Vice Chair)
Business Owner
Recognized Authority (Business)

Tracy St. Benoit
Researcher and High Risk Ethnographer, University of Florida
Recognized Authority (Rehabilitation)

Joylin Kirk
Senior Director of Mission Services, Goodwill Industries
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Nichole Coleman
Executive Director, County Veterans Service Officer
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Richard M. Jones
Member, American Legion, Sr. Vice-President, CBS Corporation
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Ryan Gallucci (Chair)
Deputy Director of Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Henry G. Jackson

President & CEO , Society for Human Resource Management Representative (Mandated Organization)

M. Eric Eversole

Vice President and Exec. Dir., Hiring Our Heroes Program

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Representative (Mandated Organization)

Pam Gerassimides

NLX Director & Assistant Executive Director

National Association of State Workforce Agencies Representative (Mandated Organization)

David Quam

Deputy Director, Policy Office of Federal Relations

National Governors Association Representative (Mandated Organization)

Darrell L. Roberts

Executive Director, Helmets to Hardhats

Labor Union or Organization Representative (Mandated Organization)

Ross Brown

JP Morgan Chase

Business Roundtable Representative (Mandated Organization)

Lois A. Bethards

Executive Director for the American Indian Center of Arkansas

Recognized Authority (Business)

Ex-officio, Nonvoting Members

- Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- Secretary of Defense
- Director, Office of Personnel Management
- Asst. Secretary of Labor (VETS)
- Asst. Secretary of Labor (ETA)
- Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration