

Economic Nuggets

April 1, 2022

The latest news, views, and announcements

INSIDE

Economy

Employment & Transition

*Education, Licensing &
Credentialing*

Homelessness & Housing

*Small Business & Government
Contracting*

Meetings

Career Fairs

Legislation Tracking

Action taken on Legislation

Resource Page

More Stories

National Veterans Employment & Education Commission Newsletter



VE&E'S LATEST ANNOUNCEMENT

Industrial facilities of PCK Raffinerie oil refinery are pictured in Schwedt/Oder, Germany, March 7, 2022. The company receives crude oil from Russia via the 'Friendship' pipeline. Picture taken March 7, 2022. (Photo: REUTERS/Hannibal Hanschke)



Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said on Wednesday global energy markets would collapse if sanctions were imposed on oil and gas from Russia, a major exporter of hydrocarbons.

The European Union, which relies heavily on Russian energy, has been considering expanding sanctions on Moscow imposed over the Ukraine crisis to include hydrocarbons. EU foreign ministers disagreed on Monday about whether to proceed. [read more](#)

The American Legion's Veterans Employment and Education Division is looking to bring back the [Keystone Pipeline Project Resolution](#) during Spring NEC



ECONOMY

A mall in Miami Beach, Fla., this month. Forecasters predicted that consumer demand would taper off as pandemic relief dried up, but shoppers are still spending. (Photo: Scott McIntyre for The New York Times)

IS AMERICA'S ECONOMY ENTERING A NEW NORMAL?

Policymakers are wrestling with the reality that the pandemic may mark a turning point in the nation's economic plot.

The pandemic, and now the war in Ukraine, have altered how America's economy functions. While economists have spent months waiting for conditions to return to normal, they are beginning to wonder what "normal" will mean.

Some of the changes are noticeable in everyday life: Work from home is more popular, burrito bowls and road trips cost more, and buying a car or a couch made overseas is harder.

But those are all symptoms of broader changes sweeping the economy — ones that could be a big deal for consumers, businesses and policymakers alike if they linger. Consumer demand has been hot for months now, workers are desperately wanted, wages are climbing at a rapid clip, and prices are rising at the fastest pace in four decades as vigorous buying clashes with roiled

supply chains. Interest rates are expected to rise higher than they ever did in the 2010s as the Federal Reserve tries to rein in inflation.

History is full of big moments that have changed America's economic trajectory: The Great Depression of the 1930s, the Great Inflation of the 1970s and the Great Recession of 2008 are examples. It's too early to know for sure, but the changes happening today could prove to be the next one.

Economists have spent the past two years expecting many of the pandemic-era trends to prove temporary, but that has not yet been the case.

Forecasters predicted that rapid inflation would fade in 2021, only to have those expectations

foiled as it accelerated instead. They thought workers would jump back into the labor market as schools reopened from pandemic shutdowns, but many remain on its sidelines. And they thought consumer spending would taper off as government pandemic relief checks faded into the rearview mirror. Shoppers have kept at it.

Now, Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens the global geopolitical order, yet another shock disrupting trade and the economic system.

For Washington policymakers, Wall Street investors and academic economists, the surprises have added up to an economic mystery with potentially far-reaching consequences. The economy had spent decades churning out slow and steady growth clouded by weak demand, interest rates that were chronically flirting with rock bottom and tepid inflation. Some are wondering if, after repeated shocks, that paradigm could change.

"For the last quarter century, we've had a perfect storm of disinflationary forces," Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, said in response to a question during a public appearance this week, noting that the old regime had been disrupted by a pandemic, a large spending and monetary policy response and a war that was generating "untold" economic uncertainty. "As we come out the other side of that, the question is: What will be the nature of that economy?" he said.

The Fed began to raise interest rates this month in a bid to cool the economy down and temper high inflation, and Mr. Powell made clear this week that the central bank planned to keep lifting them — perhaps aggressively. After a year of unpleasant price surprises, he said, the Fed will set policy based on what is happening, not on an expected return to the old reality.

"No one is sitting around the Fed, or anywhere else that I know of, just waiting for the old regime to come back," Mr. Powell said.

The prepandemic normal was one of chronically weak demand. The economy today faces the opposite issue: Demand has been supercharged,

and the question is whether and when it will moderate.

Before, globalization had weighed down both pay and price increases, because production could be moved overseas if it grew expensive. Gaping inequality and an aging population both contributed to a buildup of savings stockpiles, and as money was held in safe assets rather than being put to more active use, it seemed to depress growth, inflation and interest rates across many advanced economies.

Japan had been stuck in the weak-inflation, slow-growth regime for decades, and the trend seemed to be spreading to Europe and the United States by the 2010s. Economists expected those trends to continue as populations aged and inequality persisted.

Then came the coronavirus. Governments around the world spent huge amounts of money to get workers and businesses through lockdowns — the United States spent about \$5 trillion.

The era of deficient demand abruptly ended, at least temporarily. The money, which is still chugging out into the U.S. economy from consumer savings accounts and state and local coffers, helped to fuel strong buying, as families snapped up goods like lawn mowers and refrigerators. Global supply chains could not keep up.

The combination pushed costs higher. As businesses discovered that they were able to raise prices without losing customers, they did so. And as workers saw their grocery and Seamless bills swelling, airfares climbing and kitchen renovations costing more, they began to ask their employers for more money.

Companies were rehiring as the economy reopened from the pandemic and to meet the burst in consumption, so labor was in high demand. Workers began to win the raises they wanted, or to leave for new jobs and higher pay. Some businesses began to pass rising labor costs along to customers in the form of higher prices.

The world of slow growth, moderate wage gains and low prices evaporated — at least temporarily. The question now is whether things will settle back down to their prepandemic pattern.

The argument for a return to prepandemic norms is straightforward: Supply chains will eventually catch up. Shoppers have a lot of money in savings accounts, but those stockpiles will eventually run out, and higher Fed interest rates will further slow spending.

As demand moderates, the logic goes, forces like population aging and rampant inequality will plunge advanced economies back into what many economists call “secular stagnation,” a term coined to describe the economic malaise of the 1930s and revived by the Harvard economist Lawrence H. Summers in the 2010s.

Fed officials mostly think that reversion will happen. Their estimates suggest that low inflation and slow growth will be back within a few years, and that interest rates will not have to rise above 3 percent to achieve that moderation. Market pricing also suggests inflation will slow with time, albeit to higher levels than investors expected in 2018 and 2019.

But some of today’s trends look poised to linger, at least for a while. Job openings are plentiful, but the working-age population is growing glacially, immigration has slowed, and people are only gradually returning to work from the labor market’s sidelines. Labor shortages are fueling faster wage gains, which could sustain demand and enable companies to charge higher prices.

Given that, some policymakers and economists have said there is a chance that the economy is at an inflection point.

It is possible that “the massive fiscal and monetary intervention in response to Covid-19 has moved the economy to a higher-pressure, higher-inflation equilibrium, with people earning more and spending more than before,” Neel Kashkari, president of the Minneapolis Fed, wrote in a recent essay.

Global forces could exacerbate those trends. The past year’s supply chain issues could inspire companies to produce more domestically — reversing years of globalization and chipping away at a force that had been holding down wage and price growth for decades. The transition to greener energy sources could bolster investment, pushing up interest rates and at least temporarily lifting costs.



A FedEx worker delivered packages in New York this month. Global supply chains have not been able to keep up with demand. (Photo: DeSean McClinton-Holland for The New York Times)

“The long era of low inflation, suppressed volatility and easy financial conditions is ending,” Mark Carney, a former head of the Bank of England, said of the global economy in a speech on Tuesday. “It is being replaced by more challenging macro dynamics in which supply shocks are as important as demand shocks.”

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which has the potential to rework global trade relationships for years to come, could leave a more lasting mark on the economy than the pandemic did, Mr. Carney said.

“The pandemic marks a pivot,” he told reporters. “The bigger story is actually the war. That is crystallizing — reinforcing — a process of de-globalization that had begun.”

Mr. Summers said the current period of high inflation and repeated shocks to supply marked “a period rather than an era.” It is too soon to say if the world has fundamentally changed. Over the longer term, he puts the chances that the economy will settle back into its old regime at about 50-50.

“I don’t see how anyone can be confident that secular stagnation is durably over,” he said. On the other hand, “it is quite plausible that we would have more demand than we used to.”

That demand would be fueled by government military spending, spending on climate-related initiatives and spending driven by populist pressures, he said.

In any case, it could take years to know what the economy of the future will look like.

What is clear at this point? The pandemic, and now geopolitical upheaval, have taken the economy and shaken it up like a snow globe. The flakes will eventually fall — there will be a new equilibrium — but things may be arranged differently when everything settles.

Smialek, Jeanna. “Is America’s Economy Entering a New Normal?” The New York Times, The New York Times, 24 Mar. 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/business/economy/america-russia-pandemic-inflation.html>.

ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- The national unemployment rate is **3.8 percent** (February 2022)
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is **3.2 percent** (February 2022)
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is **4.8 percent** (February 2022)
- In February 2022, the veteran unemployment rate was **3.1%**, down from **3.5%** the previous month. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was **3.8%** in February.
- Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled **4,658** an increase of **13** from the preceding week

HOUSEHOLD DATA

Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted

[Numbers in thousands]

| Employment status, veteran status, and period of service | Total | | Men | | Women | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Feb. 2021 | Feb. 2022 | Feb. 2021 | Feb. 2022 | Feb. 2021 | Feb. 2022 |
| Unemployed | 497 | 285 | 427 | 230 | 70 | 56 |
| Unemployment rate | 5.5 | 3.2 | 5.4 | 3.0 | 6.1 | 4.6 |



**EMPLOYMENT
& TRANSITION**

TRUCKING APPRENTICESHIPS FOR VETERANS ‘GOOD RECRUITING AND RETENTION TOOL’ SAYS INDUSTRY INSIDER

Many carriers struggle with hiring and retaining dependable drivers. According to some in the industry, transitioning military veterans may be the key to solving those hiring woes.

Software development company [Fastport](#) is one company dedicated to helping transitioning service members find jobs in trucking. The company is also a U.S. Department of Labor-funded intermediary working to establish registered apprenticeship programs in the transportation industry.

Fastport was among the presenters during The Value of Veteran Drivers event on March 24 at the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, Ky. The lecture, presented by Veterans in Trucking, was part of the Pro Talks education series at MATS.

Dave Harrison, executive director for national apprenticeships and military program management for Fastport, said transitioning service members possess a valuable set of soft skills. These include leadership, adaptability, loyalty, integrity and work ethic. Harrison said those skills are one of the big reasons veterans make good drivers.

“No one is getting these skills in college or in high school,” Harrison said. “Sadly, most aren’t getting them at home. Veterans have all these soft skills, and those are what employers need.”

Harrison, who served as an adviser for [President Biden’s 90-Day Trucking Action Plan](#), said he believes that the call to serve is another reason former military members make a smooth transition to the industry.

“We know without the military this country dies. We also know that without this industry this country dies. In that sense, we’re still serving,” he said.

According to Matt Roland, vice president of sales for Veterans in Trucking, the similarity in

lifestyles between the military and the trucking industry is another reason transitioning service members are well equipped to be drivers.

“We’re bringing awareness to the parallels and crossover between trucker life and military life,” Roland said. “We’re committed to helping our military heroes transition into a life in the trucking industry.”

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS HAVE AN IMPACT ON DRIVER RETENTION

According to data from Fastport, 94% of new truck driver apprentices remain at their employer after their apprenticeship has ended. Additionally, employers with registered apprenticeship programs can offer G.I. Bill benefits to veterans.

“That’s money on top of the salary you’re paying your driver,” Harrison said. “I gotta imagine that’s a pretty good recruiting and retention tool.” Josh Mecca, director of recruiting with Kansas City, Mo.-based [American Central Transport](#), is a proponent of hiring veterans. He said the success they’ve had hiring former military members has led them to target veterans in recruiting efforts.

“We’re about one-third veterans across our general fleet,” Mecca said. “We were recruiting to veterans and the numbers in our classes showed. We find that not only are veterans just great people, they’re also great employees.”

The American Legion applauds Fastport’s endeavors in assisting Transitioning Servicemembers find gainful employment in the trucking industry, especially through its action to promote apprenticeships and engage in veterans-focused outreach and recruitment [Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

Witkowski, Ryan. “Trucking Apprenticeships for Veterans ‘Good Recruiting and Retention Tool’ Says Industry Insider.” Land Line, 24 Mar. 2022, <https://landline.media/trucking-apprenticeships-for-veterans-good-recruiting-and-retention-tool-says-industry-insider/>.

LACK OF CHILD CARE, LONG UNEMPLOYMENT ARE KEEPING MILITARY SPOUSES OUT OF WORKFORCE, SURVEY FINDS

Limited affordable child care combined with extended unemployment has kept the spouses of active-duty service members out of the job market, according to a new report released Wednesday by Blue Star Families, a national nonprofit that supports the military community.

Unemployment for spouses of active-duty members has remained at 20% for the last two years, the report found, a rate four to six times the total national average.

According to the nonprofit's 2021 Military Family Lifestyle Survey, access to and costs of child care, plus long gaps in meaningful employment, served as critical barriers to spouses obtaining new job opportunities. But military leaders and lawmakers say they are working to find fixes.

Thirty-four percent of those who answered the survey said that child care was too expensive, and 25% said that they had been out of the workforce too long and did not know how to get back into the job market, factors that along with the regular moves mandated by military life have led to elevated unemployment for years.

More than 8,000 active-duty troops, National Guardsmen and reservists, veterans and military family members responded to this annual survey between April and June 2021 about key issues facing the military community, including health, quality of life, financial security, housing and unemployment.

"I know from my personal experience that with pride and service to the country there also come many unique challenges military families face as opposed to their civilian counterparts," Jill Kiah-Saslav, a military spouse, said at a virtual event Wednesday announcing the results of the survey. The percentage of spouses of active-duty members who no longer participate in the labor

force remained relatively flat, increasing from 41% in 2020 to 42% last year -- excluding spouses who are on active duty themselves -- but the survey underlines a broader trend that quality child care is a primary impediment to finding jobs.

"The frequent relocations, the time spent apart from your loved ones, the lack of employment or underemployment for spouses and changes to your children's education can be incredibly challenging," Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said during the online event. "Add on top of that all a global pandemic."

The pandemic also amplified the difficulty military spouses confront finding affordable and available child care. More than half of all American families spent over \$10,000 on child care in 2021, according to a Care.com survey.

With more children taking classes remotely last year, many military spouses told Blue Star Families that they chose to serve as educators at home rather than balance a job with expensive and limited options for child care.

That trend was compounded by a growing number of survey takers in active-duty families who are choosing to home-school their children - 13%, which is nearly four times higher than the percentage of children 5-17 years old who are home-schooled in the general population.

In addition to child care, the report cited certification transfers for military partners, such as teacher's licenses, as a significant impediment to retaining employment due to frequent moves. "The annual survey provides an important pulse check for me and other senior military leaders on how our families are doing, and it helps inform our policy process," Wormuth said.

She noted a few steps the Army has taken to combat the issue of military spouse

unemployment, including expanding the staff of the service's employment readiness team.

Military spouse employment ranked No. 1 among the top five issues facing active-duty military families, according to the report, closely followed by "time away from family" and "child(ren)'s education."

Sens. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., and Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., also spoke during the online event about their recent efforts to require the Department of Defense to conduct an in-depth study on military spouse employment issues. Last year, the DoD for the first time opened a separate biennial survey to all military spouses about their military life experiences. The hope is that the survey will help the Defense Department gauge whether and how to adjust its family oriented programs.

The military services have launched a number of tools like MilSpouse Money Mission and the MyNavy Family app that are designed to help military families navigate employment and find financial resources.

The American Legion awaits the results of the Department of Defense's military spouse survey and reminds private and public sector employers of their moral obligations to hire veterans and military spouses, per [Resolution No. 81: Military Spouse Employment](#).

Jonathan Lehrfeld, Jonathan. "Lack of Child Care, Long Unemployment Are Keeping Military Spouses out of Workforce, Survey Finds." Military.com, 17 Mar. 2022, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/03/17/lack-of-child-care-long-unemployment-are-keeping-military-spouses-out-of-workforce-survey-finds.html>.

¿DID YOU KNOW?

VRRAP HELPS VETERANS RETURN TO THE WORKFORCE

Over the past two years, [the COVID-19 pandemic](#) has impacted workers in the United States. VA is dedicated to helping unemployed Veterans return to the workforce during this crisis through the [Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program](#) (VRRAP). VRRAP provides up to 12 months of tuition, fees and a monthly housing allowance to eligible Veterans who are training toward employment in a [high-demand occupation](#).

[Approved VRRAP training](#) providers are located nationwide and offer education for associate degrees, non-college degrees and certificate programs. What makes this program unique is the participation agreements with training providers. Incentives are given to these partners with a "pay-for-performance" model. VRRAP training providers receive a payment when participating Veterans start, complete their VRRAP program and secure employment in their chosen field. At VA, outcomes are driving what we do, and Veterans returning to the workforce after completing a VRRAP program is a top priority.

To assist Veterans in finding the right job after completing their training, VA has partnered with [Hiring Our Heroes](#) to



offer support and guidance and to provide employment assistance. Through network events, outreach forums, lunch & learns, job previews and resource fairs, Veterans can utilize Hiring Our Heroes [career connectors](#), [resume engine](#), resources and other tools to find a job.

If you are an eligible Veteran, VRRAP is an excellent option to help you overcome the impact of COVID-19 and seek out a new career opportunity. From business operations and construction to education and social services, a new path is ready for you to explore. [Applying online](#) is quick and easy. In this short [video](#), you'll learn how more than 4,100 fellow Veterans have already started utilizing the benefit.

Get started now! Companies recognize Veterans' value and work ethic. Launch your career forward and take advantage of this limited-time program.

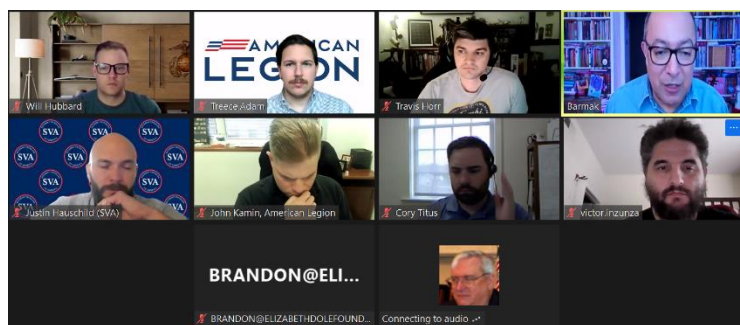
Gillan, Jennifer. "VRRAP Helps Veterans Return to the Workforce." *Vantage Point*, 17 Mar. 2022, https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/101477/vrrap-helps-veterans-return-to-the-workforce/?utm_source=VReventslink&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources.

Staff Meetings on Employment Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Veteran Service Organizations and Military Service Organizations to provide awareness of issues for the third round of negotiated rulemaking.

Barmak Nissarian, Vice President for Higher Education Policy with Veterans Education Success (VES) spoke about 90/10, Gainful Employment, fraud vectors, and federal funding technicalities.

Regarding 90/10, Mr. Nissarian indicated that the Military Housing Allowance Provisions would be excluded. Conversely, Chapter 35 and Montgomery GI Bill benefits should be included in the final calculation of 90/10 so that unscrupulous actors do not target survivors of servicemembers.



Mr. Nissarian found the income sharing model to pay for college problematic, as it shored future wages for students and saw that the money made its way to institutions through cash flow analysis.

Some areas might be problematic for For-Profit institutions to be on board with, regarding state grants with federal funding. For example, if a 3rd party grant has federal funding mixed in it, the grant must be separated. The extreme position is that the grant would be denied if the small percentage of federal funding cannot be separated from the larger percentage.

When discussing Gainful Employment, which has a more immediate impact on students, Mr. Nissarian stressed that the program must satisfy the debt to income ratio.

Concerns arose regarding for-profit institutions exploiting the system by rebranding as non-profit. Mr. Nissarian emphasized administrative capability as an avenue for consensus.

Given that finalized regulations are harder to overturn, For-Profits see the 90/10 and Gainful Employment Provisions as a threat. The Gainful Employment Rules may be rescinded, according to Mr. Nissarian, who also expressed doubts that 90/10 will pass before June 2023. Similarly, between 2011 and 2014, the Education Department was inundated with letters by lobbyists, which delayed attempts to finalize regulations.

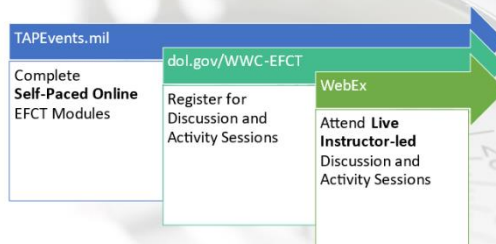
The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a demonstration of the US Department of Labor (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) Transition Assistance Program's (TAP) Wounded Warrior and Caregiver Employment Fundamentals of Career Transition (WWC EFCT) Pilot.

The Pilot Program provides self-paced, online training for Transition Assistance Program modules with accompanying live, instructor-led Discussion and Activity Sessions (DAS). The online EFCT modules can be accessed at TAPEvents.mil. To register for DAS, one must sign up at dol.gov/WWC-EFCT. After registering, participants attend the instructor-led DAS through WebEX.

The pilot ends at the end of March. DOL VETS will take all the input from participants who took the course (such as wounded warriors, caregivers, facilitators, and other interagency partner curriculum specialists) and update the online course. Based on the input, DAS will be restructured while also updating components of the online section to ensure it reflects the changes.



Blended Learning Concept and Adult Learning Theory



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Dan Fazio, Managing Editor at GI Jobs Magazine, to discuss collaboration opportunities. GI Jobs holds Virtual Career Expos (VCE) on the last Wednesday of each month and wishes to offer The American Legion a free booth as a resource to attendees. Additionally, GI Jobs wanted to invite the National Commander to record a keynote Q&A for an upcoming VCE, sharing his success story as a veteran, offering advice to military job seekers, and promoting the benefits of American Legion Membership.



The magazine holds Get Hired Workshops the Wednesday before every VCE. GI Jobs has worked with the VA and American Corporate Partners to date. A Wounded Warrior Project workshop is in the works. The Division expressed interest in working with G.I. Jobs on an upcoming workshop to assist with Financial Literacy, Federal Resume Assistance, and Social Media Assistance for Transitioning Servicemembers.

GI Jobs Magazine was also keen on collaborating on content by increasing the use of Legion subject matter experts as sources for articles. Topics of discussion include boosting awareness of the SkillBridge program, putting the spotlight on the oft-forgotten veterans in US territories, and advocacy for employment, education, and business ownership.

The Division plans to introduce Mr. Fazio to the Media & Communications and Membership Divisions at the American Legion HQ in Indianapolis for a follow-up conversation regarding the placement of free G.I Jobs resources in The Legion Magazine and its site.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing on ‘Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by the U.S. Department of Transportation’. Some issues discussed were the reconstruction of the economy, workforce issues, training/education programs and infrastructure problems.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division, The Media & Communications Division, and the Brand Strategy & Innovation Division met with Lucas Miller, Talent Acquisition Specialist at Contact Government Solutions (CGS) Federal, to discuss collaboration opportunities. CGS Federal is a public and private contractor with 1600 available jobs nationwide within the STEM field and would like to recruit veterans to fill the openings. CGS Federal is also interested in working with The American Legion to be listed in its magazine, digital publications, and website to further bring attention to its opportunities.



**EDUCATION,
LICENSING &
CREDENTIALING**

TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE MILITARY? LOOK AT DOD'S SKILLBRIDGE

Retiring or separating from the military can be challenging, especially when you're trying to determine what career you want to pursue post-separation. Luckily, you're not alone in this process.

The Department of Defense's (DoD's) SkillBridge program helps transitioning servicemembers like you navigate your next steps once you have completed your military service. You have gained many transferable job skills during your time in the military, and now it's time to put those skills to work.

WHAT IS SKILLBRIDGE?

The [DoD's SkillBridge program](#) is an opportunity for military members to gain valuable work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships and internships. Participants get to work with employers, who act as industry partners. You'll have the opportunity to match your military or other job training and experience to various job opportunities.

According to the Pew Research Center, [26% of veterans](#) find shifting into a post-military career very difficult. If you're apprehensive about transitioning out of the military, SkillBridge is an excellent program to investigate.

[Cushman & Wakefield Military Recruiting Program Leader Matt Disher](#) notes that the SkillBridge program "has the potential to solve post-military employment disparities that have challenged veterans for generations." SkillBridge opportunities help military members navigate non-military employment environments and learn to use their unique skillsets in new ways.

However, it's important to note that participating employers will not provide compensation or benefits for your participation in the SkillBridge program. If you participate, you will continue to receive your regular military pay and benefits. Make sure you check with your military service

administration first, as there are exceptions to this rule.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SKILLBRIDGE PARTICIPATION

Before researching SkillBridge programs, it is important to note that not all servicemembers may qualify for inclusion. You may be eligible to participate in SkillBridge if you:

- Have less than 180 days of service remaining prior to your date of separation and have at least 180 continuous days of active service
- Agree that participation in SkillBridge can be terminated at any time by your military service if mission requirements dictate it

Some industry partners will allow military spouses and veterans to participate in a SkillBridge training if there is available capacity. The DoD will not pay a salary or provide benefits for spouses or veterans who participate in a training program, but the industry partner might provide compensation.

If you're a military spouse, consider seeking career advice through the [DoD's Spouse Education and Career Opportunities \(SECO\) program](#).

THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN A SKILLBRIDGE PROGRAM

According to [Amazon Military Programs Manager Beau Higgins](#), SkillBridge provides the best opportunity for military members to transition into a non-military role.

The DoD SkillBridge program is designed to give you a useful opportunity to put your skills to work before you separate from the military. The job market may have changed in the time you've spent in service. By participating in a SkillBridge program, you can enhance your marketability in today's job market.

In SkillBridge, you also get to network with potential employers who have exciting opportunities available. The connections you make along the way will help you easily make the transition into your new career journey.

Amazon is fully committed to this program, hiring over 200 transitioning servicemembers through several SkillBridge programs in the last year. Higgins notes, “As a transitioning servicemember, you cannot afford to pass up this opportunity, if at all possible.”

John Deere is another DoD SkillBridge industry partner that offers internship opportunities to transitioning servicemembers at their dealership and factory locations. According to [Workforce Project Manager David Ottavianelli](#), SkillBridge helps servicemembers learn about the industry and understand potential career options post-military.

HOW TO FIND SKILLBRIDGE OPPORTUNITIES

The DoD has a running [list of training opportunities](#) with authorized employers. Opportunities are available in various industry fields, such as:

- Civil service
- Energy
- Information technology
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Transportation

We strongly advise you to [use DoD’s SkillBridge search tool](#) to locate opportunities you want to explore. You can also reach out to your military installation’s SkillBridge contact person to find SkillBridge training opportunities. You can locate your SkillBridge contact person by visiting

your base Education Office, Transition Assistance Office, or your unit’s command support staff.

[50Strong is another organization that helps servicemembers](#) find SkillBridge opportunities. 50Strong’s mission is to support the collaborative efforts of industry stakeholders toward a veteran-ready workforce ecosystem. They provide several services, such as Employer Connects and SkillBridge Connects, that help servicemembers learn about available SkillBridge options as well as connect you with companies who are hiring.

After you have researched SkillBridge programs, contact your Unit Commander. They will need to authorize your participation before you sign an agreement with an employer.

CHAT WITH SOME OF THESE SKILLBRIDGE EMPLOYERS AT OUR UPCOMING VCF ON MARCH 16

The University’s Career Services Department works with a multitude of employers who also participate in the SkillBridge program, including:

- Adobe
- Amazon
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Lockheed Martin
- Raytheon Technologies

If you’re interested in learning more about job opportunities with some of these employers, [attend our upcoming Employing Those Who Serve Virtual Career Fair](#) (VCF) on March 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. This VCF is an excellent opportunity to chat one-on-one with eager recruiters looking to hire active-duty servicemembers, veterans and military spouses.



[You can also learn which employers will attend our VCF](#) ahead of time by visiting the Student Success Center in your e-campus.

Being prepared for a VCF will help you navigate your conversations with ease and ensure you have the best experience at our event. To prepare, [learn how to successfully engage with recruiters](#) by making sure you know how to start a conversation, develop high-quality questions, and

follow up after the VCF. [Contact a Career Coach](#) for a resume or elevator pitch review, questions about employers, and help researching available positions.

Zbikowski, Chelsea. "Transitioning out of the Military? Look at DOD's SkillBridge." Edge, 28 Feb. 2022, <https://amuedge.com/transitioning-out-of-the-military-look-at-dods-skillbridge/>.

DOL VETS SELECTS FASTPORT FOR THE EMPLOYMENT NAVIGATOR AND PARTNERSHIP PILOT

The US Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS) has selected FASTPORT to participate in the Employment Navigator (EN) and Partnership Pilot (ENPP). The pilot was initiated by the DOL to directly assist transitioning service members and their spouses by leveraging services and expertise of many non-governmental organizations.

The ENPP provides one-on-one career assistance at 18 select military installations worldwide. This support is in addition to the formal DOL Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classroom instruction and with the mission to help transitioning service members and their spouses secure meaningful and lasting post-separation careers.

FASTPORT will use its workforce development expertise and industry networks to connect the transitioning military community to the nation's leading training providers and employers. "FASTPORT is committed to providing the industry with technical assistance and overarching support to accelerate apprenticeship programs. We can help any company in as little as 48 hours," said FASTPORT President Brad Bentley referencing their timeline and work as the White House Apprenticeship Accelerator for the administration's 90 Day Trucking Challenge.

"VETS is glad to have FASTPORT on our team as one of our many Employment Navigator



Pictured with microphone, Bill McLennan, CEO of FASTPORT, presented employment opportunities to transitioning Soldiers at Fort Drum, NY. One of the selected military installations for the ENPP.

Partners," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, James D. Rodriguez, Veterans' Employment and Training Service. "These partnerships are intended to improve transitioning service members and their spouses' employment goals. We are committed to partnering with organizations who are leaders in providing our service members and their spouses with specialized opportunities."

"FASTPORT continues to build employment and training connectivity for diverse candidates seeking better employment opportunities through technology and public and private partnerships," said Dave Harrison, Executive Director –

Workforce Development and Government Relations of FASTPORT.

ABOUT DOL VETS

The Department of Labor Veteran Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS) has a vision to enable all veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses to reach their full potential in the workplace. Its mission is to prepare America's veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses for meaningful careers, provide them with employment resources and expertise, protect their employment rights, and promote their employment opportunities.

ABOUT FASTPORT

FASTPORT, Inc. is a software development company that builds partnerships and digital

products to accelerate businesses and launch careers. Our people and technology interact with the most productive veteran hiring initiatives in the United States and have received multiple contracts from the US Air Force Small Business Innovative Research program. FASTPORT is also the U.S. Department of Labor's Industry Intermediary and a part of the Centers of Excellence to support apprenticeship development and sustainability. For more information, visit www.fastport.com or www.nationalapprenticeship.org.

Paid content from Newswire, PRESS RELEASE: "Dol Vets Selects Fastport for the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot." AP NEWS, Associated Press, 11 Mar. 2022, <https://apnews.com/press-release/newswire/technology-business-veterans-6d3afe31a5abad0e99c2796e8794d5da>.

Staff Meetings on Education Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a White House Advisory meeting on Trucking with Elizabeth Belcaster to discuss how to get more veterans into the trucking industry and how to retain them.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Veterans Evaluation Services (VES) to discuss recent developments with Ashford University regarding the organization's recent loss of eligibility for GI Bill funding.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with the Department of Education to discuss their participation in the Licensing and Credentialing Symposium we are hosting at our National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the Department of Veteran Affairs FY 2023 rollout brief meeting.

PRESS RELEASE

VETERANS, ACTIVE DUTY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Veterans and active duty service members can get one step closer to student loan forgiveness through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

You will need to submit your application by October 31, 2022.

By cancelling loans after 10 years of public service, PSLF removes the burden of student debt on public servants, makes it possible for many borrowers to stay in their jobs, and entices others to work in high-need fields.

MONTHS ON ACTIVE DUTY COUNT

The Department of Education will allow months spent on active duty to count toward PSLF, even if the service member's loans were on a deferment or forbearance rather than in active repayment. This change addresses one major challenge service members face in accessing PSLF.



Service members on active duty can qualify for student loan deferments and forbearances that help them through periods in which service inhibits their ability to make payments. But too often, members of the military find out that those same deferments or forbearances granted while they served our country did not count toward PSLF.

This change ensures that members of the military will not need to focus on their student loans while serving our country. Federal Student Aid will develop and implement a process to address periods of student loan

deferments and forbearance for active-duty service members and will update affected borrowers to let them know what they need to do to take advantage of this change.

GIVING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES CREDIT

The Department of Education will begin automatically giving federal employees credit for PSLF by matching Department of Education data with information held by other federal agencies about service members and the federal workforce. These matches will help the Department of Education identify others who may also be eligible but cannot benefit automatically, like those with FFEL loans.

QUALIFYING EMPLOYERS

Any U.S. federal, state, local or tribal government agency is considered a government employer for the PSLF Program. This includes employers such as the U.S. military, public elementary and secondary schools, public colleges and universities, public child and family service agencies, and special governmental districts (including entities such as public transportation, water, bridge district, or housing authorities).

A government contractor isn't considered a government employer.

You can visit the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) Help Tool](#), which will help you determine if an employer is considered a qualifying employer under the PSLF Program.

INCOME DOESN'T MATTER

There is no income requirement to qualify for PSLF. However, since your required monthly payment amount under most of the qualifying PSLF repayment plans is based on your income, your income level over the course of your public service employment might be a factor in determining whether you have a remaining loan balance to be forgiven after making 120 qualifying payments.

KNOW YOU HAVE CREDITABLE SERVICE?

If you know that you have qualifying employment that you have not yet certified with the Department of Education, you can certify that employment now by using the PSLF Help Tool at www.StudentAid.gov/pslf.

HAVEN'T APPLIED YET?

You will need to submit a PSLF form so the Department of Education can review your loans under the simplified rules and determine whether your current or past employers qualify for PSLF. You can submit this form through the PSLF Help Tool at StudentAid.gov/PSLF. Because the Department of Education expects an influx of applicants due to this announcement, you may see some delays in having your application processed.

LEARN MORE

[Fact Sheet: Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) Program Overhaul | U.S. Department of Education](#)

[Public Service Loan Forgiveness FAQs | Federal Student Aid](#)

[U.S. Department of Education Announces Transformational Changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, Will Put Over 550,000 Public Service Workers Closer to Loan Forgiveness | U.S. Department of Education](#)

VAntage Point Contributor. "Veterans, Active Duty Can Take Advantage of Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program." VAntage Point, VAntage Point Contributor, 26 Jan. 2022, <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/99648/veterans-active-duty-can-take-advantage-of-public-service-loan-forgiveness-program/>.



HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

Construction workers move a modular unit with a crane near Merced County's Navigation Center which is under construction at 1411 B Street in Merced, Calif., on Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2020. According to the county, the 15,000 square-foot facility will help address homelessness and will operate as a low-barrier emergency shelter option for those currently residing in public spaces and other places that are deemed not suitable for human habitation.

(Photo: Andrew Kuh)

‘A VITAL WIN.’ MERCED GETS \$4.4 MILLION TO BUILD SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

The City of Merced's effort to house its unsheltered residents is getting a boost from \$4.42 million in state funds, the California Department of Housing and Community Development announced Thursday.

The grant is part of the state's second round of Project Homekey funding, according to a news release. The statewide initiative aims to expand housing for homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness, recognizing unsheltered people

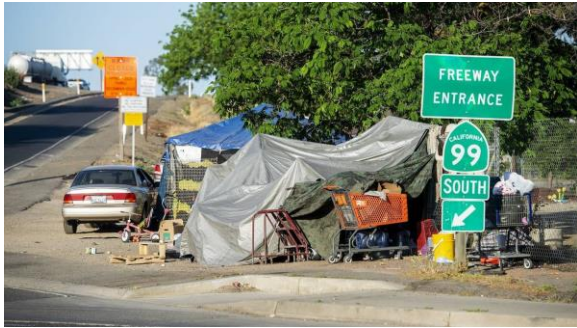
are impacted by COVID-19 and at risk for other communicable diseases.

Merced will leverage the funds to build 21 units of permanent supportive housing for veterans experiencing chronic homelessness, the release said.

“This is a vital win for Merced,” said Assembly member Adam Gray, D-Merced, in the release. “This permanent supportive housing will help

veterans, who are homeless, and their families find and sustain permanent housing. I am glad to see this state funding coming into our community,” said Gray.

The city will partner with local groups to construct the homes at South R Street near Childs Avenue in Merced’s District 2.



An encampment is seen along the Highway 99 south on-ramp off of G Street in Merced, Calif., on Thursday, May 6, 2021. (Photo: ANDREW KUHN)

Improving housing options for homeless and low-income residents has largely dominated discussions at Merced City Council meetings this year and last. The topic is one of the city’s top goals and priorities.

The housing project plans to transform modular shipping containers into homeless veteran housing, similar to those at the county’s homeless Navigation Center.

Residents will have access to supportive services including intensive case management, assistance with behavioral and physical health resources, help obtaining benefits and essential documentation, education and employment.

Rescue Mission Merced, Fresno Veterans Affairs, Merced County Behavior Health and Human Services Agency, Merced Housing

Authority and Custom Containers 915 are collaborating with the City of Merced to complete the project.

“We recognize that those who are unhoused in our community are our constituents,” Councilmember Fernando Echevarria, whose District 2 encompasses the project site.

“As we evaluate resources, systems and infrastructure, we will continue to create opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness to stabilize. Housing creates a fundamental foundation that provides access to healthcare, rehabilitation, job training and education.”

The project timeline is estimated to wrap construction within eight months, according to Custom Containers 915 President John Glavin.

The more than \$4 million for Merced is part of \$1.4 billion administered by the state Department of Housing and Community Development to public jurisdictions including cities, counties, housing authorities and tribal entities within California.

Funds are to be used for developing a range of housing, such as hotels, single family homes, multi-family apartments and adult residential facilities.

The American Legion supports the decision to fund all 14 veterans support programs for housing and business, as providing housing for homeless veterans aligns with [Resolution No. 12: Housing Options for Homeless Veterans](#).

LAUTEN-SCRIVNER, ABBIE. “CA Awards Merced \$4 Million to House Unsheltered Veterans.” MERCED SUN-STAR, MERCED SUN-STAR, 17 Mar. 2022, <https://www.mercedsunstar.com/news/local/article259499144.html>.

GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES \$8.4 MILLION AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN BINGHAMTON

Revitalization Project Continues State's Investment in City's North of Main Neighborhood with 23 Energy-Efficient Affordable Homes. Investment Complements "Southern Tier Soaring" - The Region's Comprehensive Strategy to Revitalize Communities and Grow the Economy

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced the start of an \$8.4 million affordable housing development in Binghamton's North of Main neighborhood. Known as the North of Main Revitalization, the scattered-site project will create 23 modern and energy-efficient affordable homes across seven separate locations north of Main Street. Priority for four of the apartments will be given to veterans with physical disabilities.

"All New Yorkers deserve the opportunities that an affordable home in a thriving neighborhood can provide and our continued investments in Binghamton will yield a safer, healthier and stronger city," Governor Hochul said. "The revitalization efforts in the North of Main area will replace blighted structures and vacant lots with modern, secure and comfortable homes in energy-efficient buildings. By working together with our local partners, we can continue to fund projects across the state that strengthen and rebuild our communities from the ground up"

North of Main Revitalization is part of Governor Hochul's sweeping plans to make housing more affordable, equitable, and stable. This year, the State is poised to reach the goal of its current Housing Plan of creating and preserving 100,000 affordable homes and 6,000 with support services. Governor Hochul is building on this successful effort with a proposal for a new \$25 billion, five-year Housing Plan that will create and preserve an additional 100,000 affordable homes in urban and rural areas across New York including 10,000 with support services.

Six existing buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries will undergo substantial renovations and a new building with four apartments will be constructed on a vacant lot at 95 Walnut Street. The seven sites are within a four-block area of each other.

All 23 apartments will be affordable to households earning at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income. Four apartments will be designed to accommodate individuals with physical disabilities who will also have access to services provided by the Southern Tier Independence Center. Priority for these homes

will be given to persons who have served in the armed forces of the United States.

Each building will meet green design standards and will include energy-efficient features such as Energy Star appliances, Energy Star lighting and low-VOC building materials. The six existing buildings will be weatherized to improve heating and cooling efficiency.

The North of Main Revitalization project is the second state-financed redevelopment in Binghamton's North of Main neighborhood. In 2020, construction was completed on the Crandall-North Street Revitalization project that created 37 affordable homes and commercial space at scattered locations on Crandell Street and North Street. The developer for both projects is the First Ward Action Council.

State financing for North of Main includes Federal and State Low-Income Housing Tax Credits that will generate \$5.4 million in equity and \$2.4 million in subsidy from New York State Homes and Community Renewal. Additionally, the New York Weatherization Assistance Program awarded \$76,000 to the project. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority will provide \$23,000 in support. The City of Binghamton will provide \$355,000.

Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner Ruth Anne Visnauskas said, "Binghamton's North of Main neighborhood is undergoing a transformation that will improve quality of life for both longtime residents and the next generation. In partnership with the First Ward Action Council, we are renovating buildings in disrepair across the neighborhood, creating 23 new high-quality homes on vacant lots which will expand access to affordable housing opportunities for more New Yorkers, including for those who have served our nation."

NYSERDA President and CEO Doreen M. Harris said, "NYSERDA is pleased to support the North of Main Revitalization project, which showcases energy efficient features and materials that will ensure the comfort of Binghamton's low-income residents and veterans who will call this

neighborhood home. As this project and many others across the state break ground, we are seeing Governor Hochul's clear commitment to making affordable housing accessible and healthy for all New Yorkers."

Executive Director of First Ward Action Council Jerry M. Willard said, "We are very pleased to be celebrating construction today eliminating blight and rebuilding housing block by block in the North of Main neighborhood with the crucial support of NYS Homes and Community Renewal, the City of Binghamton, development team members and friends and neighbors."

State Senator Fred Akshar said, "Safe, stable and affordable housing is an essential step in helping those in need in our community get back onto the path to success. Our veterans have sacrificed so much, and the least we can do as a grateful community is to help meet their most basic needs when they return home."

Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo said, "I'd like to thank NYS Homes & Community Renewal, the First Ward Action Council, and the City of Binghamton for their ongoing effort to revitalize the North of Main neighborhood. As an advocate at the state level for affordable housing, I am delighted to see this level of state and local investment in the City of Binghamton's housing needs. The focus on disabled veterans for several of the units is especially appreciated."

County Executive Jason Garnar said, "I'm pleased to see this project that creates 23 new units of affordable housing get underway and am especially appreciative that four units will be designated for disabled veterans. This development complements the work we're doing at the County level to increase the availability of affordable housing. Thank you to NYS HCR, First Ward Action Council, and my partners in State and local government for their support of this project."

Mayor Jared M. Kraham said, "This project furthers the revitalization of Binghamton's North of Main neighborhood and adds to the growing number of new affordable housing units in the City. Few neighborhoods in the Southern Tier have seen as much investment or transformation in recent years as NoMa, which has become a statewide model for neighborhood revitalization. The City is proud to partner with the First Ward Action Council and New York State to continue investing in our neighborhoods, reducing blight and creating much-needed quality, affordable housing for families in Binghamton."

ACCELERATING SOUTHERN TIER SOARING

Today's announcement complements "Southern Tier Soaring," the region's comprehensive blueprint to generate robust economic growth and community development. The regionally designed plan focuses on attracting a talented workforce, growing business and driving innovation. Now, the region is accelerating Southern Tier Soaring with a \$500 million State investment through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative. The State's \$500 million investment will incentivize private business to invest well over \$2.5 billion - and the region's plan, as submitted, projects up to 10,200 new jobs. More information is available here.

The American Legion, aligned with [Resolution No. 331: Support Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), supports the new edition of affordable homes that give preference to veterans'.

"Governor Hochul Announces \$8.4 Million Affordable Housing Development in Binghamton." Governor Kathy Hochul, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-84-million-affordable-housing-development-binghamton>.

Staff Meetings on Homelessness Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with a group of community lawyers who work together to advocate programs and push legislation to change the lives of at-risk communities. The meeting was a listening group to explore ways to collaborate efforts among like groups and to increase the impact for change. The group writes letters to various federal agencies on behalf of constituents to address issues within communities surrounding homelessness. The discussion focused on housing for people with convictions.

The takeaway for this meeting as it pertains to homelessness is there are letters that have been submitted to regulate landlords and their authority to operate bad screening practices. These letters were sent to U.S. Department of Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Trade Commission but there have been no responses. This raises the following questions.

Questions involved ways forward. How do we get better responses? Is patience the best practice? Does anyone have contacts for any of the federal housing organization so that we can ask questions to get insight into what is being done? Should we be aggressive or patient. Deborah's answer concerning HUD was that "the department is understaffed so if you have a priority the best way forward is to keep it fresh in the minds of organization."



Eric Sirota
(Shriver Center Director
of Housing Justice)



Deborah Thrope Deputy
Director National Housing



Law Project (NHLP)
Eric Dunn Director of
Litigation NHLP

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the "FEMA: Building a Workforce Prepared and Ready to Respond Part 2." hearing. The committee discussed the ways Congress can support FEMA regarding bolstering the organization's workforce, expanding the training and education about disasters and climate change and working to help underserved and underrepresented communities.

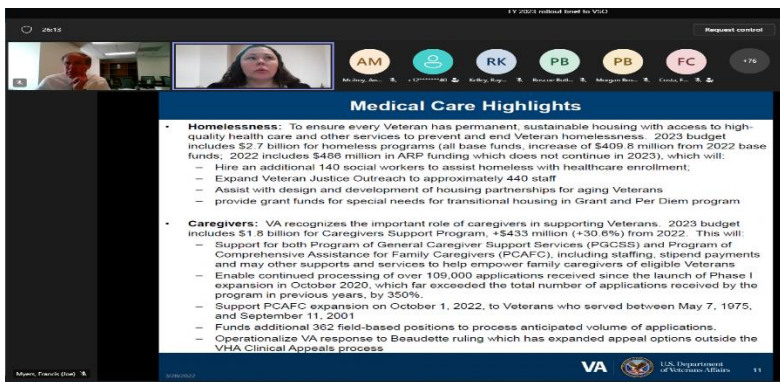
The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing 'Housing America: Addressing Challenges in Serving People Experiencing Homelessness' topics included problems homeless people face, the data points that show the effect of homelessness, and about the laws and policies the United States could implement to decrease the rate of homelessness.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division staff assisted a veteran in Fort Pierce, Florida who requested assistance with finding a house for rent. Staff provided the veteran local resources and contacted The American Legion's Florida Department to assist in directing the veteran toward grassroots programs.

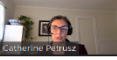
The National Veterans Employment and Education Division staff assisted a veteran spouse in St. Petersburg, Florida who requested assistance with housing accommodations for her family of three children. Staff provided the veteran local resources and contacted The American Legion's Florida Department to assist in directing the veteran toward grassroots programs.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division staff assisted a veteran in Lucedale, Mississippi who requested assistance with housing accommodations or assistance to avoid foreclosure. Staff provided the veteran resources and gave a warm hand-off to The American Legion's Mississippi Department to assist in directing the veteran toward grassroots programs.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division staff attended a VSO brief of the FY2023 budget rollout hosted by The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). The need of homelessness continues to be a high priority. The budget included \$2.7 billion for homeless programs. These funds will hire an additional 140 social workers and expand Justice Outreach Staff to over 400. Additionally, it will assist with the design and development of housing partnerships for aging veterans and provide grant funds for special needs transitional housing in the Grant and Per Diem program. Charles Tapp, (CFO of Veteran Benefits Administration) thanks VSO partners for being good partners as they focus on delivering benefits and services to veterans that honor their service. Multiple speakers expressed gratitude to VSO's for the support and advocacy that contributed to this outcome.



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division staff attended a webinar focused on the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). The event was facilitated by the National Court Reporters Association and brought attention to the history, processes, and benefits of CRA. When thinking about Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) it is important to think about why banks exist in the first place. There must be a balance between the banks needs and the community needs. CRA discovered that banks were not fulfilling their duties to empower all people within their communities with the ability and resources to



Benefits of CRA

CRA-covered institution lending in LMI communities since 1996:

- \$883 billion in loans for affordable housing and economic development projects
- \$973 billion in 24 million small business loans

Economists also find that CRA-covered lending is safer and sounder than non-CRA covered lending.

achieve home ownership or entrepreneurship. The American Legion is focused on getting information to veterans and service members that will empower them to become homeowners.



Sen. Cindy F. Friedman (D-Arlington) joined her colleagues in the state Senate on March 10 to unanimously pass legislation to increase public oversight of the administration of state-operated veterans' homes in Holyoke and Chelsea.

To improve safety and transparency at the veterans' homes, the bill would restructure the chain of command to more closely match established administrative practices used in hospitals and other large organizations.

This legislation follows continued scrutiny of administrative failures at the veterans' home in Holyoke, which led to the tragic deaths of 77 veterans during the early days of the pandemic. It builds on recommendations made by the Special Joint Oversight Committee on the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Covid-19 Outbreak, which investigated the tragedy.

PLAYED LEAD ROLE

In the wake of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home outbreak, Friedman played a lead role in negotiating a bond bill to finance construction of a new home.

"I am so pleased that this bill passed the Massachusetts Senate, as it ensures added protections to the health and wellbeing of veterans at these state-run facilities," stated Sen. Friedman, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, in a March 11 news release. "My work on the Holyoke Soldiers' Home bond bill provided me with an understanding of just how important these facilities are to Massachusetts veterans and with stronger oversight, we can improve the services the facilities offer while also preventing future tragedies."

A similar version of the bill previously passed the state House of Representatives, so a conference committee will now be appointed to resolve any differences between the Senate and House versions.

This comprehensive reform bill is designed to increase the safety of residents of veterans' homes in the Commonwealth. A new, full-time ombudsperson would receive, investigate, and assist in resolving complaints related to the health, wellbeing, and rights of veterans' homes' residents and staff. To effectively aid these efforts, a public hotline would be created for residents and staff to direct concerns.

REGULAR INSPECTION

The bill would also task the Department of Public Health (DPH) with regularly inspecting the homes; all inspection reports would be made publicly available, excluding identifying information of patients and staff. Additionally, veterans' homes would have to be licensed as long-term care facilities by DPH and adhere to the same standards and regulations.

Amendments adopted during floor debate will ensure that all veterans' homes employ both an infection control specialist and an emergency preparedness specialist; have adequate infection control programs in place; and establish best practices for treating post-traumatic stress disorder.

Other adopted amendments direct the Secretary of Veteran's Services to conduct an outreach program on the benefits and application process for the veterans' homes and require all annual reports from the statewide and regional veterans' homes advisory councils to be publicly accessible online.



State-operated veterans' homes in Massachusetts are managed by a superintendent, who is responsible for everyday operation of the homes and for ensuring improvements to quality of care. The Senate's legislation would give the authority to appoint a superintendent for each of the veterans' homes to the executive director of the Office of Veterans' Homes and Housing (OVHH). Under the legislation, a superintendent would have to be a licensed nursing home administrator with experience running a long-term care facility. Priority would also be given to superintendent candidates who are themselves veterans.

The executive director of OVHH would be appointed by the Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans Services, which would be elevated to a cabinet-level position, appointed by the Governor. The Secretary would be required to promulgate regulations concerning the operations and administration of veterans' homes. Elevating the Secretary to a cabinet-level position would facilitate more timely attention to all personnel challenges.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

In addition to altering the command structure responsible for managing veterans' homes, the bill would also create a statewide Massachusetts Veterans' Homes Advisory Council, tasked with recommending policies to the secretary of veterans services, as well as regional councils, which would be tasked with representing the interests of the local community, residents, and family members at each veterans' home. All of these councils would report annually to the Secretary and to the Legislature. Together with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, these councils would be empowered to submit nominations for and recommend the removal of superintendents.

Furthermore, the bill would require each home to have a full-time specialist in infection control and emergency preparedness and to adhere to medically-sound guidelines for trauma-informed care, including best practices for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide prevention. The homes would also have to maintain organizational plans, updated annually, for normal and emergency operations.

The Senate's bill would remove existing procedural hurdles which make it harder to donate operating supplies, clothing, medical equipment, personal hygiene products, and holiday gifts to veterans' homes. This legislation would set procedures and guidelines for filling vacant positions at veterans' homes, including posting job openings in a timely fashion and ensuring that an employee is available to temporarily be tasked with any unfulfilled emergency duties while the position is vacant. Additionally, annual performance reviews would be mandated for all leadership positions at each home.

To facilitate veterans' access to health care, state-operated veterans' homes would be required to accept Medicare and Medicaid payments. The bill would also provide mental health resources to employees of state-operated veterans' homes who worked during the pandemic and create a commission to rename the Veterans' Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke after specific Massachusetts veterans.

Finally, the Senate adopted an amendment to establish March 21 as Veterans' Homes Remembrance Day, to honor the veterans who lost their lives due to the tragic Covid-19 outbreaks at veterans' homes.

Acosta, Stephen. "Friedman Helps Pass Oversight Reform Bill for Veterans' Homes." > YourArlington.com - Your News, Your Views, 14 Mar. 2022, <https://www.yourarlington.com/search/news-archive/359-pol-serve/20095-vets-031422.html>.



**SMALL BUSINESS
& GOVERNMENT
CONTRACTING**

DOT RELEASES POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TARGETING SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTION

Dozens of ships anchored outside of America's busiest ports, steadily spiking freight rates, and frustrated consumers inheriting both the paralyzing delays and the exorbitant price increases: these have been the painful realities within the global supply chain in recent years. In a whole-of-government effort to mitigate the root and proximate causes of the supply chain crisis, the Biden administration has responded with a roadmap for achieving a more efficient and more resilient supply chain. On 24 February, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a report titled "Supply Chain Assessment of the Transportation Industrial Base: Freight and Logistics," which provides multiple recommendations to address the ongoing supply chain crisis. Responding to Executive Order 14017: America's Supply Chains, the report identifies and addresses ongoing challenges, while offering potential policy responses to strengthen the nation's supply chain. [Supply Chain Assessment of the Transportation Industrial Base: Freight and Logistics](#)

The central theme of the DOT's thorough report is the necessity to build resilient supply chains to address current and future disruptions. As a result of several factors, including the growth of "just in time" supply chains, the overwhelming demand for import cargoes during the COVID-19 pandemic, industry consolidation, and a general lack of investment in infrastructure, DOT is concerned that the current supply chain lacks resilience. The report highlights that concern in stark terms, noting that the pandemic has compounded existing supply chain issues, which has resulted in temporary port closures, shortages across the supply chain, elevated levels of congestion, and increased prices for consumers. The release also highlights a number of barriers to supply chain resilience that the recommendations hope to mitigate, including

equipment and warehouse capacity, workforce conditions, and data availability, among others.

The report recognizes that the federal government cannot unilaterally solve supply chain disruptions, as many of the component parts of the freight supply chain are owned and operated by the private sector, but notes that federal, state, and local agencies can still play an important part by funding infrastructure investments, appropriately regulating the industry, improving supply chain data flows, and supporting cross-sector or multi-jurisdictional efforts to address supply chain resilience.

The report makes 62 specific recommendations for action by the DOT and related agencies in order to address these challenges and attempt to bolster the nation's supply chain. The recommendations cover the whole spectrum of transportation supply chain stakeholders, addressing both very broad and relatively narrow policies. The findings are further separated based on the level of complexity of achieving its goal balanced against the cost of implementation and other corresponding factors. Among the report's key recommendations are:

- Investing in freight infrastructure, such as ports, bridges, and railroads, to enhance capacity and connectivity;
- Developing inland ports and warehouse locations, as well as investing in the inland waterway system;
- Coordinating with interagency partners to provide temporary solutions to ease port congestion, such as "pop-up" intermodal yards for containers;
- Providing technical assistance to support the planning and coordination of freight investments and operations and supporting workers employed

in this sector, including through new apprenticeship programs and a focus on utilizing military veterans to fill civilian logistics jobs;

- Developing and implementing strategies to improve the trucking sector, including ensuring that there is truck parking availability consistent with land use and safety considerations;
- Supporting domestic manufacturing, ally-shoring and nearshoring efforts;
- Improving data and research into supply chain performance, including the tracking of freight and supply chain data, and encouraging the development of state-level freight planning; and
- Urging certain regulatory efforts, such as harmonizing the roles of the Surface Transportation Board (STB), Federal Maritime Commission, and the DOT and supporting certain transportation-related legislation/regulations, such as urging Congress to enact shipping regulatory reform, or encouraging the STB to require railroad track owners to provide rights of way to passenger rail.



This latest DOT release is just one initiative in the administration's ongoing effort to address supply chain disruption and infrastructure investment. In addition to the report, the administration has recently announced numerous reforms, reports, and programs, including:

Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP): DOT's Maritime Administration recently announced a notice of funding opportunity for the PIDP, which makes nearly US\$450 million

available in funding. The program is focused on port-related projects that improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port. Action on this program further demonstrates the Maritime Administration's focus on addressing supply chain issues.

Trucking Action Plan: In December 2021, DOT announced the Trucking Action Plan, which focuses on the recruitment of more truck drivers and improvement in job quality to address the low retention rate. The plan includes partnering with the Department of Labor on apprenticeship programs, a pilot program for truck drivers between the ages of 18-21, driver compensation studies, a driver leasing task force, and more.

Additional Reports: The DOT report was one of seven reports that various agencies submitted in response to the same Executive Order. Most pertinent to transportation, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) also addressed transportation blockages in their supply chain report, entitled "USDA Agri-Food Supply Chain Assessment: Program and Policy Options for Strengthening Resilience."

The DOT's supply chain report is a wide-ranging plan of action that, if implemented according to all 62 recommendations, would impact the entirety of the transportation supply chain. Secretary Pete Buttigieg reinforced the criticality of the recommendations, noting that "decades of underinvestment in our infrastructure, unprecedented consumer demand amid our strong economic recovery, and continued pressure from the pandemic have all put immense strain on our supply chains" and "this report lays out critically important steps we can take – both right now, and in the years ahead – to help strengthen our supply chains, create good-paying jobs, and ensure that Americans can affordably and efficiently access the goods they rely on."

However, some of the recommendations face direct opposition from industry stakeholders. The freight rail industry, for example, has noted that

the recommendations encouraging the STB to impose new economic regulations on the industry, and require it to provide rights of way to passenger rail, will actually undermine the goals of the report by disrupting the fluidity of supply chains. As the Biden administration weighs further action, engagement from industry on the real-world implications of the recommendations will be crucial.

The concurrent crises of port congestion, supply chain disruption, and rising consumer product pricing have put considerable pressure on individuals and companies at every touchpoint of the global economy. As the federal government searches for answers to the productivity and resiliency challenges, these recommendations will guide the future actions of the DOT and the Biden administration.

The American Legion supports the bolstering of our nation's supply chains and several of the

policy recommendations align with the Legion's own resolutions. For one, the report recommends strong support for domestic manufacturing, ally shoring, and near-shoring efforts. This recommendation aligns with [Resolution No. 13](#), which states, "The outsourcing of manufacturing and raw material production has undermined America's national and economic security and created an over-reliance on foreign-made products. Increasing the number of manufacturers in America will create more well-paying, skill-based jobs for veterans and increase their quality of life."

Copyright 2022 K & L Gates. (2022, March 8). Dot releases policy recommendations targeting supply chain disruption. The National Law Review. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/dot-releases-policy-recommendations-targeting-supply-chain-disruption>

VA SUPPORTS WOMEN VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS IN HOW TO OBTAIN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Graduates from the Department of Veterans Affairs' [Women Veteran-Owned Small Business Initiative](#) recently finished the VetBizLadyStart program, paving a way for [their future in the federal marketplace](#).

The inaugural 14-week program, completed in early February, provided women transitioning out of the military, tools and resources to manage and grow their small businesses in government contracting.

Training modules and small group discussions were hosted by successful women mentors from the government and commercial sector. The initiative works to bridge the gap between economic disparities by providing disadvantaged populations equal access to contracts.

President of WJM Professional Services LLC Veronica Lane, was one of 20 women Veterans who participated in the sessions.



"I am grateful for completing this program and the opportunity to meet with motivated women Veterans," Lane said. "My goals were to ramp up and receive four contract awards and apply for an increased line of credit from my business banker — and I was able to accomplish both!"

VA Chief of Staff Tanya Bradsher attended the ceremony. “The graduation marks a step toward fulfilling President Biden’s Executive Order [Advancing Racial Equity in Underserved Communities](#),” Bradsher said. “What better way to answer the call than a program that brings results for our women Veterans, who in turn can use these tools to become successful business contractors, bringing opportunities back to those in their communities.”

The EO aims to identify and remove barriers in the federal government that impact the ability of individuals within underserved socioeconomic categories to seek viable economic opportunities.

According to the Small Business Administration, [only 15% out of 2.5 million](#) Veteran-owned business are owned by women Veterans. The Women Veteran-Owned

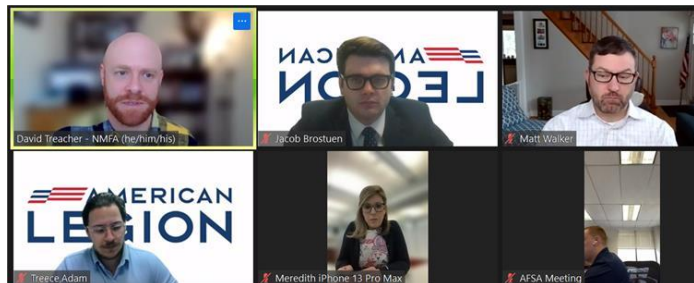
Small Business Initiative, part of VA’s [Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization](#), is focused on using VetBizLadyStart to increase awareness of opportunities for women-owned small businesses to increase these numbers.

VetBizLadyStart is a federally funded program and collaborates with the Women’s Business Centers of the [District of Columbia, Maryland](#) and Virginia’s [Old Dominion University](#). Entrepreneurship programs are offered through each organization to assist women in preparing for procurement.

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. (2016, September 1). Veterans Affairs. Go to VA.gov. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www.va.gov/OPA/PRESSREL/pressrelease.cfm?id=5769>

Staff Meetings on Small Business Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with other interest groups to discuss an advocacy strategy for promoting the adoption of **H.R. 2974, The Military Spouse Hiring Act**, which would extend provisions of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to Military Spouses. Veterans and Service-Disabled Veterans are currently eligible for the program.



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division conducted a meeting with a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business to discuss how to proceed with assisting their bid-protest. The American Legion and the company met with representatives from the Small Business Administration

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division held a strategy meeting with Charles Fowler, Chairman of the Veterans Small Business Task Force, to provide updates to the chairman and discuss resolutions to be considered at the American Legion National Convention. Additionally, Mr. Fowler and

The American Legion staff discussed a strategy for advancing the Veterans First Contracting Program to the Department of Defense.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Jon Clark, Staff Director for the House Subcommittee on Veterans Economic Opportunity, to discuss a variety of small business and government contracting issues. Specifically, The American Legion and Mr. Clark discussed the possibility of the subcommittee considering a hearing focused on the lack of government agencies meeting their government-mandated contracting goals of 3% of total spending for both prime and subcontracts. The VE & E Division, The American Legion Legislative Division, and Mr. Clark will continue to be in correspondence about this issue and others relevant to the small business and government contracting portfolio.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Veterans Evaluation Services (VES) to discuss recent developments with Ashford University regarding the organization's recent loss of eligibility for GI Bill funding. Given that Ashford University was acquired by the University of Arizona, this has the implication of negatively impacting thousands of veteran students. The American Legion will be closely monitoring the situation and working with other veteran service organizations to take appropriate action as the situation develops.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with other interest groups to discuss an advocacy strategy for promoting the adoption of H.R. 2974, The Military Spouse Hiring Act.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division conducted a meeting with a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business to discuss how to proceed with assisting their bid-protest.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Joe Wynn, Associate Administrator Office of Veterans Business Development to discuss a Vet Force Business Quarterly Conference to include items on: Access to Capital, Procurement Issues, moving CVE to SBA, and training.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a hearing on 'Review of SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs and Initiatives', discussion centered on the importance of and review the efficacy of the SBA's (Small Business Administration) small business and entrepreneurial programs.



SPOTLIGHT

SBA ANNOUNCES FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE CONTINUATION OF BOOTS TO BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) invites eligible non-profit organizations, state and local government agencies, private sector firms, and institutions of higher learning to submit proposals to provide synchronous online entrepreneurship training to transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. The entrepreneurship training shall be a continuation of the training participants receive as part of SBA's [Boots to Business](#) (B2B) training program.

The awarded organization will develop and maintain a curriculum about entrepreneurship for the veteran and military community as a follow-on to the B2B and B2B Reboot programs. The awardee will also provide counseling, training, technical and financial skill development, as well as comprehensive business assessments and mentoring services.

“It’s the SBA’s goal to assist service members and their families to make a successful transition to civilian life. The initial Boots to Business course is one step in that process,” said [Tim Green, Acting Associate Administrator for SBA’s Office of Veterans Business Development](#). “With continued entrepreneurial training, we hope that more veterans and military spouses will feel confident on their path to small business ownership at home.”

This award is for a base project period of 12 months, with four 12-month non-compete continuation periods of 12 months each. The funding is available annually for up to five years. The SBA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement from this announcement. For specific instructions on obtaining, completing, and submitting an application, visit [www.grants.gov](#) and search opportunity number SB-OVB2-22-002 or CFDA 59.044.

Proposals submitted via other media, including SBA’s website, will be rejected and will not be evaluated. Submissions must be sent via [grants.gov](#) no later than **11:59 p.m. EDT on Monday, April 11, 2022**.



SBA’s Office of Veterans Business Development will host an information session to answer questions about the funding opportunity on Friday, March 18, at 2 p.m. EDT. Please dial 202-765-1264 and enter access code: 119 636 209# or join through this Microsoft Teams link: [Click here to join the meeting](#).

Direct any questions about the B2B funding opportunity to Jerry Godwin at [jerry.godwin@sba.gov](#). Submit questions no later than Wednesday, March 16, at 5 p.m. EDT.

For issues with [grants.gov](#), please call the Grants.gov Support Line at 1-800-518-4726 or email [support@grants.gov](#).

PRESS RELEASE. (2022, March 10). SBA announces funding opportunity to provide continuation of Boots to business entrepreneurship training. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www.sba.gov/article/2022/mar/10/sba-announces-funding-opportunity-provide-continuation-boots-business-entrepreneurship-training>



AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

DEPARTMENT OF PARIS:

103rd Anniversary of The American Legion on rue Ernest Psichari where the first caucus of The American Legion took place March 1919. Commander Bryan Schell from American Legion Paris Post 1 gave a speech commemorating the anniversary while being supported by Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons of Paris Post 1.

[WATCH VIDEO HERE](#)



CAREER FAIRS

Virtual Job Fair

April 7, 2022
1pm - 3pm ET

VIRTUAL CAREER EXPO: SOLAR ENERGY

Military community job seekers from around the globe will meet, network, and interview with solar energy industry employers at this interactive virtual hiring event.

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)
[More information](#)

The American Legion is working on future in-person/virtual workshops and career fairs.

The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission's Mission is to take actions that affect veterans' economic well-being, including issues relating to veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.



LEGISLATION TRACKING

EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 5545 - Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions (REMOTE) Act: This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 12/21/2021 - Became Public Law No: 117-76

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

S. 1607 - Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021: This bill would improve veterans' access to information about higher education and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore benefits that veterans use at schools subject to civil enforcement.

Status: 12/15/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably.

[Resolution No. 327: Support further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices](#)

H.R. 4233 - Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act: This bill would award grants to community-based Veteran Centers to provide counseling and mental health services to veterans using VA higher education benefits.

Status: 11/17/2021 – Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

H.R. 1836 - Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021: This bill would expand eligibility for the post-9/11 GI Bill to count every day that a servicemember is paid and in uniform toward benefit eligibility in order to achieve GI Bill parity for National Guard and Reserve members.

Status: 11/4/2021 – Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.

[Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)

H.R. 5676 - PREP Act: This bill establishes, within the Bureau of Prisons, an Office of Prison Education. The office must provide educational services to incarcerated individuals, including veterans, in federal prisons and correctional institutions. It would also require the office to inform eligible incarcerated veterans of their earned VA educational benefits.

Status: 11/02/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

H.R. 5509: Student Veteran COVID-19 Protection Act of 2021: This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/25/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

H.R. 5483 – Informing VETS Act: This bill would award grants to community-based Veteran Centers to provide counseling and mental health services to veterans using VA higher education benefits.

Status: 10/25/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality-of-Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

S.1944- Vet Center Improvement Act of 2021: To improve Vet Centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Status: 12/15/2021 – Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably.

[Resolution No. 8: Child Care at Vet Centers](#)

S.2274 - Federal Cybersecurity Workforce Expansion Act: To authorize the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish an apprenticeship program and to establish a pilot program on cybersecurity training for veterans and members of the Armed Forces transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes.

Status: 11/13/2021 – Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.

[Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO

S. 1838 - Building Credit Access for Veterans Act of 2021: This bill expands access to housing for veterans and current servicemembers by establishing a pilot program using alternative credit scoring information for veterans and service member.

Status: 11/17/2021 - Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

H.R. 5783 - Reaching Every Homeless Veteran Act of 2021: This bill amends title 38, United States Code, to improve homeless veterans reintegration programs.

Status: 10/28/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

H.R. 2190 - Helping Homeless Veterans Act of 2021: This bill permanently establishes existing programs that assist homeless veterans and other veterans with special needs.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 4977 - Better Cybercrime Metrics Act: This bill establishes enhanced cybercrime reporting mechanisms.

Status: 12/8/2021- Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary. Reported Favorably

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

H.R. 3193 - Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility Act: This bill authorizes the Department of Commerce to award economic development grants for public-private partnerships and certain consortiums to carry out specified broadband projects.

Status: 11/15/2021 - Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

[Resolution No. 1: Expansion of Broadband in Rural Areas](#)

H.R. 4515 - Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act of 2021: This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors.

Status: 11/03/2021 Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

H.R.3469 - Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2021: This bill provides statutory authority for the Boots to Business Program, which provides entrepreneurship training to individuals including veterans and active members of the Armed Forces, to be administered by the Small Business Administration.

Status: 11/03/2021 – Passed in the House of Representatives

[Resolution No. 222: Reaffirm Support of the Small Business Administration’s Office of Veterans’ Business Development](#)

S. 2812 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act: This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

H.R.5354 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act: This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Introduced in the House Committee on Ways and Means

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

S.1687 - Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2021: This bill requires the Small Business Administration to establish a program for certifying at least 5 or 10% of the total number of employees of a small business development center to provide cybersecurity planning assistance to small businesses.

Status: 5/18/2021 – Introduced in the Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

**ACTION TAKEN ON
LEGISLATION**

EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

H.R.6112 – MOVE Act: To extend the delimiting period for certain individuals to use educational assistance benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 12/01/2021 – Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

H.R. 5918: To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 11/29/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity:

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

H.R.5151 - Col. James Floyd Turner IV U.S.M.C. GI Bill Transfer Act of 2021: To amend title 38, United States Code to provide for the transfer of entitlement to educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs when an eligible individual dies after approval of transfer and before transferring all of the individual's entitlement, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status 11/04/2021: Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

Draft Bill - VET Student Loan Act: This draft bill would eliminate the time limits on many veterans' education benefits retroactively.

Action Taken: Bill Reviewed - Support

Status: Draft – Not yet introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

Draft Bill - Boldly Repaying America's Veterans with Education Act (BRAVE Act): This draft bill would amend Section 108(f) of the Internal Revenue Service Code to eliminate the taxability of discharged student loans for veterans who died or were left permanently disabled as a result of their service.

Action Taken: Bill Reviewed - Support

Status: Draft – Not yet introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 347: Veterans Education Debt Forgiveness](#)

Draft Legislation on SCRA for Education: "To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to establish protections under that Act for a member of the Armed Forces who leaves a course of education, paid for with certain educational assistance, to perform certain service."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Service member and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

S.2761 – Every Veteran Counts Act of 2021: To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to maintain demographic information regarding veterans and publish such information on a website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: Bill Reviewed - Support

Status: 12/15/2021 – Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably.

[Resolution No. 378: United States Census to Include Veterans Information](#)

H.R.2196 - Justice for Servicemembers Act: To amend title 9 of the United States Code to prohibit predispute arbitration agreements that force arbitration of certain disputes arising from claims of servicemembers and veterans.

Action Taken: Bill Reviewed – Support. Joint Letter of Support submitted 11/17/2021.

Status: 10/19/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law.

[Resolution No. 85: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#)

Draft Legislation on WARTAC Report: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report on the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What’s Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 105: Support and Expand Warrior Transition Advancement Course \(WARTAC\)](#)

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 5529: Veterans Justice Outreach Improvement Act: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs on 10/08/2021

Status: 11/04/2021 Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.

What’s Next: Pending Action by House

[Resolution No. 145: Veterans Treatment Courts](#)

H.R. 5624 - SSVF Report Requirement: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the shallow subsidy program under the supportive services for veteran families program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 11/02/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What’s Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Program](#)

H.R. 5606- Return Home to Housing Act: This bill amends title 38, United States Code, to adjust the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21 and Quote for Support on 10/13/2021

Status: 10/25/2021- Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 24: Support Funding and Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem Program](#)

H.R. 5301 - Homelessness Tech Assistance: To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide technical assistance to recipients of grants for supportive services for very low-income families in permanent housing and comprehensive service programs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 09/30/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

Resolution: Pending Draft Resolution

H.R. 5025 - Homelessness Extend HVRP: To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase and extend the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 09/09/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

H.R.492 - Supporting Veteran Families in Need Act: To amend title 38, United States Code, make permanent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' authority to provide financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 3/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 331: Support Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

H.R. 711 - West Los Angeles VA Campus Improvement Act of 2021: This legislation would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) West Los Angeles Medical Center campus to use revenues from leases and easements as a dedicated funding source to build additional housing for homeless veterans, offset the high costs of housing construction, and help fund the provision of supportive services for veterans in the community.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 6/23/2021 - Became Public Law No: 117-18

What's Next:

S. 2172 - Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act: This bill improves grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 6/23/2021

Status: 07/28/2021 Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably

What's Next: Pending Action by Senate

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

Draft Legislation on Homeless Grant Elimination of Matching: Adjustment of Grants Awarded by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs for Comprehensive Service Programs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: Not Yet Introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

Draft Legislation on Eliminate Loan Limitations: To amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the Freddie Mac conforming loan limitation for loans made to veterans with remaining guaranty or insurance loan entitlement under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: Not Yet Introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 314: Support Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee](#)

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Substance Abuse Pilot: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on substance use and alcohol use disorder recovery for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: Not Yet Introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

Resolution: Pending Draft Resolution

Draft Legislation on Increase Homelessness Per Diem: To amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21, Provided Quote in Support of Bill on 10/13/2021

Status: Not Yet Introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 24: Support Funding and Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem Program](#)

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Elderly Pilot: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on grants for care for elderly homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: Not Yet Introduced

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PORTFOLIO

H.R.4433 - Veterans Entrepreneurship Act of 2021: This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to carry out a pilot program on issuing grants to eligible veterans to start or acquire qualifying businesses, and for other purposes. This bill would provide the opportunity for veterans to utilize their GI Bill benefits to start and finance their small businesses.

Action Taken: Supported by the National Commander in a Letter of Support submitted 08/03/2021

Status: 07/16/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Small Business

What's Next: Committee Vote

[Resolution No. 150: Expanding Post-9/11 GI Bill for Entrepreneurship](#)

H.R. 2082 - VA Supply Chain Resiliency Act: This bill would make certain improvements relating to the supply chain of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 5/4/2021 - Voted 22 - 6 by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

What's Next: A full vote in the U.S. House

[Resolution No. 55: Mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program](#)

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

| Acronym | Definition |
|---------------------------|--|
| ACE | American Council on Education |
| ACP | American Corporate Partners, a veteran's support organization |
| ATLAS | Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative |
| BLS | Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics |
| C&P | V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam |
| CAVC | Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims |
| CCME | Council of College and Military Educators |
| COLA | Cost-of-living adjustment |
| CSAAVE | California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education |
| DIMO | Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| DOL-VETS | Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services |
| EdCounsel | Higher education consulting firm |
| EIDL | SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan |
| GAO | Government Accountability Office |
| GPD | V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans |
| GWB | George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group |
| HEROES ACT of 2003 | Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency. |
| HVAC | House Veterans Affairs Committee |
| MCAI | American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative |
| MSLP | The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program |
| MSO | Military Support Organization |
| NAICU | National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities |
| NASAA | National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill |
| NAVPA | National Association of Veterans Program Administrators |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| NCA | V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration |
| NDAA | National Defense Authorization Act |
| NLD | American Legion's National Legislative Division |
| OPM | Office of Personnel Management |
| PPP | Paycheck Protection Program |
| RBS | Risk-Based Survey Model |
| RPIC | Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge |
| S2S | Service to School, a veteran's organization |
| SAA | State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill |
| SBA | Small Business Administration |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical |
| SVA | Student Veterans of America, a veteran's organization |
| SVAC | Senate Veterans Affairs Committee |
| TAPS | Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families |
| TEAM Act | Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits |
| TFA | American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| USERRA | Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act |
| VA&R | American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division |
| VACO | Veterans Affairs Central Office |
| VBA | V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration |
| VE&E | Veterans Employment and Education Division |
| VES | Veterans Education Success, a veteran's organization |
| VSO | Veterans Service Organization |

RESOURCE PAGE

ABOUT TANGO LIMA PODCAST

What happens when three veterans walk into a podcast studio? Vibrant camaraderie, playful joking and hot takes ensue. Join Mark Seavey, Ashley Gorbulja-Maldonado and Jeff Daly as they explore current events, interesting trends and quirky stories of interest to the military community.

The weekly podcast is produced by The American Legion.

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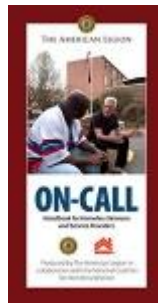
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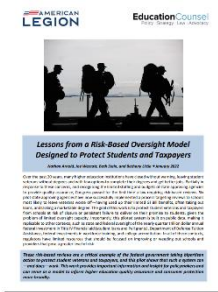
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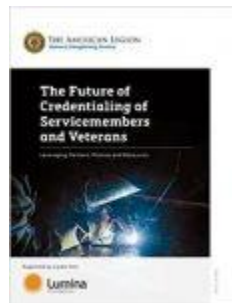
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Awards Program



The first American Legion Veterans Employment & Education Commission award was established in 1947 and honored employers across the country who had established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, disabled veterans, and older workers.

- Learn how to apply for these Awards at: <https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>
- For more information contact: **Edwin Cruz**
(202) 263-5771
ecruz@legion.org

Services That Really Help

Career fairs and workshops, guidance on education, homeless services, small business resources and more:



➤ **CAREER/EMPLOYMENT CENTER:**

- <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmscc=1>
- <https://www.legion.org/careers/resources>

➤ **HOMELESS VETERANS FIND HELP:**

- <https://www.legion.org/careers/homelesstaskforce>
- <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans/resources>

➤ **VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS:**

- <https://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits>
- <https://www.legion.org/education/federalbenefits>

➤ **VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS TOOLS:**

- <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USSBA/bulletins/2eba258>

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“In December 2021, Texas A&M University officially approved a proposal to provide priority registration to student veterans and those who are currently serving in the U.S. military.”

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