

## MILITARY SERVICE INITIATIVE

### *Veteran Transition*



GEORGE W. BUSH  
INSTITUTE



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Ensuring post-9/11 veterans and their families make successful transitions to civilian life with a focus on gaining meaningful employment and overcoming the invisible wounds of war.

## BACKGROUND

Many of the four million veterans who have served since 9/11 return home to face challenges as they transition back to civilian life. Over the next five years, another million service members will transition from the military. Challenges can include unemployment, homelessness, feelings of isolation, and debilitating health issues. These educated and highly skilled patriots are in search of effective services to help them find renewed purpose and identity. Research commissioned by the George W. Bush Institute has revealed that 71 percent of Americans say they do not understand the problems faced by those who have served since 9/11.

There is a critical need for leadership to establish a cohesive vision, collaborative focus, and accountability to effectively support post-9/11 veterans and military families. The Bush Institute is providing this leadership through programs that support post-9/11 veterans and their families.

## WELLNESS

When the general public thinks of a service member injured while fighting the Global War on Terror, they likely think of visible wounds, like limb loss or severe burn. But some warriors come home with symptoms of the invisible wounds of war: post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, or both. Those who return home with the invisible wounds of war may find it challenging to tackle the barrier their injury presents to meaningful transition to civilian life.

To better understand these injuries, the Bush Institute conducted an international survey. While the survey yielded many insightful findings, one troubling statistic stuck out: Less than half of military personnel and veterans who experience invisible wounds actually receive any care. This is in direct contrast with the estimated 83 percent of warriors who receive care for a visible wound of war.

**"Many are coming home and preparing for new missions as civilians. I intend to salute these men and women for the rest of my life. Through the work of the Bush Institute, we'll be relentless in serving our vets."**

**- President George W. Bush**

In 2017, the Bush Institute announced the Warrior Wellness Alliance, linking peer-to-peer veteran networks with best-in-class health care providers. The goal is to make it easier for veterans to connect to quality care for the treatment of invisible wounds and to increase the number of veterans seeking high-quality care.

In addition, the Bush Institute developed a library of resources to combat the stigmas surrounding these wounds and to underscore the important role we each play in helping our post-9/11 warriors successfully transition from the military. Visit [www.BushCenter.org/InvisibleWounds](http://www.BushCenter.org/InvisibleWounds) to join the conversation.

## VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

Post-9/11 veterans are unemployed at higher rates than their civilian counterparts, and more than one million service members and their spouses will transition from the military over the next five years. Gaining employment is a critical element of a successful transition but can be challenging for sub-populations of veterans, such as those under 25, those without a four-year degree, minorities, women, and veterans with a non-directly transferrable technical skill set (i.e. combat arms).

To address this, the Bush Institute partnered with Deloitte and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring Our Heroes to release the Veteran Employment Transition (VET) Roadmap. The VET Roadmap presents chronological steps for veterans as they transition to post-military careers as well as reputable resources and services available to them. Similarly, the VET Roadmap can be helpful to employers seeking to establish veteran and military-friendly hiring programs. Visit [www.VetRoadmap.org](http://www.VetRoadmap.org) to learn more.

## NONPROFIT EFFECTIVENESS

Veteran-serving nonprofit organizations play a critical role in the transition process back to civilian life. The government provides significant resources, but gaps remain. Both the private and nonprofit sectors have stepped up to fill those gaps though. Yet these services can be uncoordinated and difficult to find and access by those in need.

In 2014, the Bush Institute conducted a research study focused on the effectiveness of nonprofits that serve veterans and military families. The resulting report, *Serving Our Post-9/11 Veterans*, affirms that the most effective organizations focus on a particular set of veteran issues and partner with complementary providers in delivering services. Based on these findings, the Bush Institute developed the *Toolkit for Nonprofit Organizations* and the *Toolkit for Funders*. These resources are designed for nonprofit and philanthropic leaders to improve the delivery of services to veterans across all areas of transition. The Bush Institute also created the *Veteran Nonprofit Guide* as a third corresponding resource to help veterans locate essential services, including employment services.

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