



VETERAN EMPLOYMENT TASK FORCE:

An Analysis of Ongoing Challenges
and Recommendations for a Path
Going Forward

June 2017

Co-Chaired by:

**Hiring Our Heroes • The Blackstone
Group • Deloitte • J.P. Morgan Chase's
Veteran Jobs Coalition**

On March 21, 2017, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program convened a group of private and public sector leaders, known as the Veteran Employment Task Force, to discuss the current state of veteran employment efforts. The event, co-hosted by the Blackstone Group, Deloitte Consulting LLP, and J.P. Morgan Chase, focused on lessons learned over the last five years and identified ongoing challenges to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of veterans in the workforce. The group hosted a second task force meeting on May 30, 2017, to discuss possible recommendations for future action.

This report represents the results of those meetings and provides recommendations from the Veteran Employment Task Force designed to continue public, private and nonprofit collaboration around sustained veteran employment opportunities. The report is being released as part of a National Veteran Convening – Stand-To – hosted by the George W. Bush Institute's Military Service Initiative (MSI) on June 22-23, 2017, in Washington, DC.

The following companies and organizations attended one or more task force meetings. We would like to thank them for their commitment to the employment of transitioning service members, veterans, and military families.

Hosts

Hiring Our Heroes

The Blackstone Group

Deloitte Consulting LLP

J.P. Morgan Chase's Veteran Jobs Coalition

Task Force Participants

Arcadia Group	La Quinta Inns & Suites
Bunker Labs	Lockheed Martin
Call of Duty Endowment	Philanthropy Roundtable
Capital One	Prudential
Center for New American Security	PyschArmor
Comcast NBC Universal	RallyPoint
Department of Defense, Transition To Veterans Program Office (TVPO)	RAND Corporation
Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)	Reserve Officers Association
Fastport	Schultz Family Foundation
First Data Corporation	Small Business Administration
George W. Bush Institute's Military Service Initiative	Soldier for Life
Got Your 6	Student Veterans of America
Hidden Heroes	The Constantine Group
Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)	Toyota
	USAA
	USO
	Veterati
	Walmart

Disclaimer

This report is the product of the Veteran Employment Task Force meetings and does not necessarily represent the views or opinions of any single organization that participated in the meetings.

Background

Today, the veteran unemployment rate sits lower than the national rate, and businesses rank veteran recruitment as one of their top priorities for hiring.¹ Despite the private, public, and nonprofit sectors' collective focus on reducing veteran unemployment since 2011, the veteran employment space still has significant room for advancement. Companies recognize more focus is needed to tackle the challenging goals of identifying best-fit candidates, integrating new hires, and retaining and promoting talented veterans.

Employers across the country rank recruiting veterans as a top priority.² However, many businesses do not have mature veteran hiring processes in place to select the right veteran candidates and established programs to effectively onboard, integrate, and retain veteran talent in their workforces. Few companies have onboarding programs geared towards veteran employees, and only a handful of companies have programs designed to educate non-veteran employees on veteran experiences. The government also faces challenges in preparing service members for long-term success in their transition. For many transitioning service members (TSMs), their first and only impression of civilian employment is presented during the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).

This paper examines the challenges of veteran employment during pre-transition and across the veteran employee lifecycle. For their discussions, the task force members looked at employment challenges facing TSMs, current reservists and guardsmen, and recently separated veterans with a few years in the civilian workforce. This paper also provides recommendations on how the private and public sectors can continue to collaborate and advance the cause of veteran employment.

Executive Summary

Working across the private and public sectors, the Veteran Employment Task Force analyzed the current state of veteran employment and identified ongoing challenges impacting a Transitioning Service Member's (TSM) successful transition. The task force focused on four components of the veteran employee lifecycle including: (1) Pre-transition; (2) Recruiting and Hiring; (3) Onboarding and Integration; and (4) Retention.

Task force member discussions revealed that many veterans lack a clear sense of what type of job or industry they would like to pursue or do not know how to articulate how their skills translate to the civilian workforce. Another issue the members identified is that talent acquisition members often lack military knowledge and context for evaluating veteran candidates. Starting the transition process earlier could enable veterans to spend more time thinking about employment before transitioning out of service. Finally, there was significant agreement that organizations and federal agencies need to do more on data collection to better understand the challenges faced by TSMs and find meaningful solutions to address those challenges.

The task force also provided the following possible recommendations for future actions:

- Increase Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Veteran Employment Outcomes
- Expand Apprenticeship, Fellowship, and Internship Programs for Transitioning Service Members
- Expand Data Collection, Sharing, and Analysis
- Enhance Employer Hiring, Onboarding, and Retention Best Practices
- Identify Opportunities to Customize Transition Assistance
- Create and Expand DoD Programs
- Identify Opportunities for Expanding Aptitude Testing

As the task force continues its work together, this paper represents a starting point for further analysis and discussion. Task force members are committed to finding meaningful employment opportunities for veterans—not only because it makes good business sense, but the important role it plays in our country's ability to maintain an all-volunteer force.

Veteran Employee Lifecycle

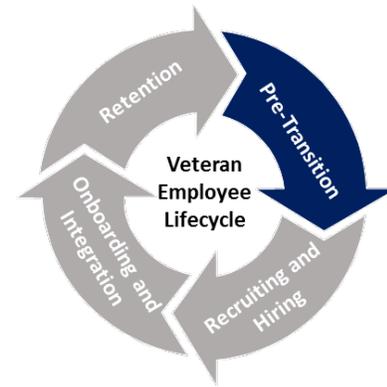
Like their civilian counterparts, veteran employees face a basic employment lifecycle that begins when they start with a company and ends when they leave. The Veteran Employment Task Force focused on three components of that lifecycle—Recruiting and Hiring, Onboarding and Integration, and Retention—and the potential challenges faced by TSMs and veterans during each aspect of their journey.

The task force also evaluated the important role that pre-transition preparation plays in the veteran employee lifecycle. TSMs are exposed to a variety of tools and resources provided by private, public, and nonprofit organizations to help them with their employment search. Because pre-transition preparation has a direct impact on other phases of the veteran employee lifecycle, the task force reviewed it as a fourth component. Each phase of the Veteran Employee Lifecycle is described in the below graphic.



Pre-transition Preparation

TSMs have a wide variety of tools and resources to help their transition from the military including those provided by the private and public sectors. From the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to on-base Transition Summits to a host of apprenticeship programs, there is no lack of programs to help TSMs understand the depth and breadth of opportunities available to them. Yet, TSMs continue to struggle as they navigate the transition process and the many tools designed to help them.



Task force members identified several opportunities that should be considered to assist TSMs seeking their first civilian job:

- **Importance of Starting Early.** According to a recent study, there is a clear correlation between TSMs who start the transition process early and successful employment outcomes post-transition.³ Those who start early face shorter periods of post-transition unemployment and are less likely to leave their first job within a year. Programs like HOH's Transition Summits play an important role in educating TSMs about potential career opportunities and connecting them with perspective employers. Task force members believe that there are opportunities for agencies to leverage existing private-public partnerships to expand pre-transition programs and offer customized program tracks and tailored learnings. *Example: Fast Track.*⁴
- **Empower Transition Programs.** While each service has an internal program to help with transition, there is significant disparity among those programs. The Army and its *Soldier for Life* (SFL) program appears to be the most mature when it comes to impact and effectiveness. The senior leadership for the Army has made transition assistance a top priority and empowered SFL to be its watchdog in the field. The other services would benefit from a similar approach and higher degree of accountability. *Example: Soldier for Life.*⁵
- **Expand Apprenticeships, Fellowships, and Internships.** Pre-transition apprenticeships, fellowships, internships provide a clear jumpstart for those TSMs who participate in the programs. Task force members agreed these programs are a valuable experience for both TSMs and employers and give TSMs the opportunity to explore career field options,

experience various corporate cultures, and better understand how their Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) translate into private sector opportunities. They can reduce periods of post-military unemployment and lead to significantly higher retention rates for TSMs in their first post-military jobs. These programs should be expanded to a greater number of TSMs. *Examples: USMAP,⁶ DoD SkillBridge,⁷ HOH Corporate Fellowship Program,⁸ Veterati.*

- **Navigating Resources and Tools.** TSMs often struggle as they attempt to navigate a never-ending supply of tools and resources designed to help them during transition. Many TSMs have difficulty finding the right tools or resources at the right time during their transition process. Having a marketplace of resources, like the Veteran Employment Transition (VET) Roadmap,⁹ can help TSMs sort through the many tools and resources and find the one that best suits their needs.
- **Analyze Existing Programs.** Some task force members raised the question of whether current government programs create the wrong incentives for TSMs to enter the workforce. Specifically, the veteran disability system was named as an example.

Recruiting and Hiring

The recruiting and hiring phase is the process by which companies attract, select, and extend offers to suitable candidates. This effort encompasses the transition of service members into their first civilian roles, as well as veterans who have been in civilian jobs for multiple years. Recruiting and hiring influences all subsequent aspects of the veteran employee lifecycle including the onboarding and integration, and retention phases.



Some veterans seek meaningful work that leverages their existing skills and abilities and others seek employment outside of the military career field in which they served. In both circumstances, veterans look for employers who can offer professional growth, career advancement, and financial stability for themselves and their families. Companies often seek to bring in veteran talent because veterans are perceived to have leadership and teamwork skills, character, and discipline.¹⁰

An effective approach to veteran recruitment not only impacts whether a business can source talent, it determines whether a veteran is placed in the right job and helps to determine how the

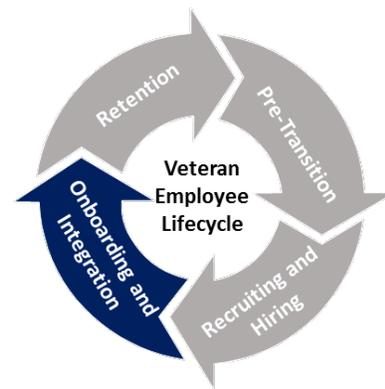
business is able to retain their talent. Up-front investment in hiring the right veterans for the right roles eases the stress on both the veteran and employer. Task force members identified the following recruiting and hiring opportunities:

- **Bridge the Communication Gap.** Employers must acknowledge that a communication gap exists between most recruiters and veteran jobseekers, particularly among TSMs. According to a recent survey, only 20% of recruiters and hiring managers indicated they had significant experience related to hiring military members.¹¹ This creates an immediate disadvantage for many TSMs who have a different set of experiences from civilian candidates since their unique skills, knowledge, and attributes can be easily misplaced, discounted, or underappreciated by recruiters who may not have the ability to appropriately categorize the skillset of the veteran candidate.
- **Increase Knowledge of Civilian Opportunities.** While service members have opportunities to explore and understand civilian careers, many TSMs lack civilian job-search skills and first-hand knowledge of civilian workplace norms.¹² The amount of time a TSM is able to dedicate towards learning more about civilian careers can vary depending on command climate, operational requirements, and location. After leaving the military, TSMs or veterans often do not consider geographic relocation for civilian employment which limits opportunities for best-fit between the veteran candidate and the potential employer.
- **Improve Sourcing of Veteran Talent.** Employers often struggle with access to TSMs—facing an uncertain and inconsistent landscape of base rules and regulations on how and when they can connect with TSMs. Finding ways to better connect employers with TSMs on a more consistent basis will create greater opportunities for TSMs to explore career opportunities.
- **Translate Military Skillsets to Civilian Jobs.** Skills translation poses a challenge for TSMs, veterans, and employers. Veterans struggle to translate their skills and experiences for employers and do not always use appropriate civilian terms to describe their military accomplishments. Also, most talent acquisition managers and recruiters have not received adequate training to understand the veteran candidate's KSAs which could prevent optimal job placement. Poor translation can contribute to underemployment, and also to retention challenges downstream.

- **Widen the Aperture.** While many programs exist to support veteran employment and many companies are engaged in veteran hiring, there is still room for expanding the dialogue and interaction between veterans and corporate America. Employers need to think of ways beyond hiring fairs to engage with the veteran population and learn how to more effectively communicate the employment opportunities that exist within their organizations. For example, as part HOH’s Transition Summits, companies are providing industry-based workshops to help TSMs better understand the depth and breadth of opportunities that exist in those industries.

Onboarding and Integration

This phase of the veteran employee lifecycle is the process of onboarding an employee into the organization, networked, and culturally aligned. Effective onboarding and integration is a challenge that applies to many organizations and a well-designed program can make a huge difference in how new employees feel, how effectively they perform their job, and how well they become integrated into to the company’ culture.



Research shows that employees need the most support during the first 18 months of employment: “[s]tandardized onboarding results in significant improvement in business metrics such as new hire retention, goal achievement for the organization, new hire performance, employee engagement, and internal fill rate.”¹³ The task force examined a number of questions related to this process. By digging deeper into the subject, questions arose around what programs exist within organizations to ensure effective onboarding and integration. The group also discussed why employees want to leave companies, the differences between the needs of junior and senior TSM’s, and what practices lead to retaining them in the first year of employment. The task force asked questions related to the following areas:

- **Job Readiness.** Was the veteran job ready at the right time they chose to accept a job? Was it the “right job-right fit” for the veteran’s knowledge, skills, and abilities? Was there a personal, family, or financial situation that caused the veteran to accept the job? Or, did the company just hire the veteran to meet its commitment to hire veterans?
- **Cultural Fit.** While a broad spectrum of corporate cultures exist, many veterans find corporate culture is quite different from military culture. Industry jobs tend to be less

focused on teams and more focused on the individual. Does the veteran understand they may not get promoted every two to three years? Do they understand how to navigate an undefined or ill-defined career path? Do they know how to advocate for themselves and what they offer an organization? Cultural training may also be an important factor to consider when onboarding new veteran hires. Once hired, veterans can sometimes experience difficulties in adapting to different cultural styles, decentralized organization, or the lack of a pre-defined career path. The task force exchanged ideas about the types of formalized training programs that some companies used to make the transition easier.

- **Sense of Purpose.** Does a company have regular check-ins and follow-ups with their veteran employees or does the organization have a practice of “hiring and forgetting?” Are there unique training programs established for new veteran hires? Does the organization help veteran employees establish a good network? If veterans do not find a sense of purpose, they may not find their job satisfying. Do they have people they can talk to and are they getting feedback? What if a veteran decides to leave a job, does that company understand why the veteran left? Was it necessarily an issue with the company? Private industry companies often have inconsistent focus on onboarding and fully integrating TSMs into companies and often lack meaningful evaluation and measurement of veteran performance. These issues make it difficult to pinpoint and understand veteran performance and how businesses can best leverage their vast talents.

Through the discussions around the onboarding and integration process, task force members determined there are some examples that work, but overall there are inconsistent approaches across private industry. The group focused on the initiatives that seem to work for organizations who have dedicated themselves to hiring military veterans. Peer to peer networks, resource groups, formalized mentoring, and veteran-specific onboarding training programs exist among some organizations (but not universally). Several members pointed out that companies also have veteran affinity groups and mentoring programs that allow veteran new hires the opportunities to interact with more seasoned veteran employees which seem to help veterans become a stronger cultural fit. Additionally, successful organizations understand the need to ask the right questions when an employee leaves to determine whether the particular job was a good fit for the veteran or if broader issues might exist. This would require an examination of the organization’s culture or onboarding and integration programs.

The task force identified the following opportunities related to veteran onboarding and integration:

- **Understand Veteran Integration Needs.** Veteran turnover during the first year of civilian employment could be reduced with targeted integration initiatives on the part of employers. Some companies offer resource groups, affinity groups, mentoring and sponsorship, peer supports, and other focused activities.
- **Narrow the Cultural Divide.** The military-civilian cultural divide could be mitigated not only during the hiring and recruitment process, but throughout the onboarding and integration of veteran employees. In addition to recruiters, employees and managers could benefit from specialized training that narrows the gap in understanding the differences and similarities between military and corporate culture. Private industry must take an equal role in learning what a transitioning veteran brings to their organization.¹⁴
- **Emphasize Corporate Mission.** Given their military service, TSMs identify maintaining a sense of mission as a top concern and priority in seeking any type of civilian employment. Employers could consider structuring onboarding and integration initiatives with teambuilding and mentoring in mind, and help veterans and all employees better understand their mission and their work in local communities.

Retention

The final phase of the veteran employee lifecycle is retention, which is described as the process by which an organization keeps employees in its workforce. The term often refers to the strategies for retention rather than the outcome of those strategies (i.e. the retention rate). Retention can also include setting conditions for employees to progress along a career path, i.e. career progression.

As highlighted by the Center for a New American Security,

“Incentivizing employers to value and measure veteran fit and performance rather than focusing on hiring metrics alone could improve retention, requiring a renewed look at how veteran hiring initiatives evaluate success and promoting programs such as mentorship and affinity groups.”¹⁵ Meeting the right people at the right time during an employee’s development can impact an employer’s ability to attract and retain a high performing workforce.



While overall veteran retention rates are slightly higher than those of non-veterans in the workforce, many veterans leave their first job within the first year.¹⁶ Some veterans leave their jobs for positive reasons, such as a move for more money, better fit, more responsibility, or a better location. A minority of veterans leave jobs for negative reasons, such as misaligned priorities or performance issues. Task force members identified the following retention and career progression opportunities:

- **Improve Data Collection.** While Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data creates a snapshot of veteran unemployment, it does not accurately depict the economic health of veterans. Indeed, as the BLS veteran unemployment rates have decreased, demand for employment services from veterans appears to have sharply risen.¹⁷ Data collection regarding veteran retention and economic performance ranges from inconsistent to nonexistent across industries. In part, this is a result of a government requirement to collect veteran employment data that applies mostly to government contractors (rather than all firms), and then only to certain veteran groups which skews results and reporting. Improving data collection efforts by both private and public sector stakeholders to better track and understand veteran employment outcomes may provide more insight into veteran economic performance and also help companies achieve better outcomes with respect to veteran employment and corporate performance.
- **Understand Underemployment.** Underemployment appears to be an issue for many TSMs.¹⁸ In fact, one recent study found that 60% of veterans report their experience and skills are greater than what is required for their current job, indicating that veterans are not being effectively matched with jobs that use their applicable skills. Understanding how TSMs are prepared to succeed in the “Gig Economy” is also crucial to veterans’ future economic success, given profound shifts in the U.S. labor market.
- **Explain Career Progression and Promotion Opportunities.** Expectations around promotion are often poorly managed by civilian employers, especially when compared to a veteran’s experience in the military. Some TSMs accept jobs at a lower level relative to their knowledge and skills to get their foot in the door which causes frustration for the veteran and the manager. One way to set appropriate expectations and reduce retention is to provide career mentoring during the transition.

The Path Forward

The private, public, and nonprofit sectors must collectively recommit to the employment of TSMs, veterans, and military families. The following are recommendations to secure a brighter future for TSMs and their families.

Recommendations

The recommendations in this section were collected during Task Force member discussions across both working sessions. The recommendations are organized by issue area and each recommendation aligns to a component of the veteran employee lifecycle, and in some instances the recommendation is cross-cutting, meaning the recommendation aligns to more than one area. For each recommendation, an organization is proposed to lead the planning and implementation. The proposed lead organization aligns to one of three stakeholder groups:

Private Sector. Many companies are already taking extraordinary steps in recruiting, onboarding, and retaining veterans. To tackle veteran employment in the 21st century, companies must leverage industry leading practices and partner with public and nonprofit organizations.

Public Sector. Given the arrival of the 45th Administration, government leaders have a unique opportunity to retool initiatives to better serve TSMs and their families in the employment arena.

Nonprofit Sector. Bridging the private and public sectors, the nonprofit sector has the power to integrate veteran employment efforts and connect directly with veterans in their journey from the military to the private sector.

Increase Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Veteran Employment Outcomes

The public-private partnership recommendations require increased collaboration between the public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

- **Establish a centralized point in the White House to coordinate activities.**
Having a centralized point of contact and action in the White House or Executive Branch is critical to drive change and consistency among the various federal agencies providing transition services to TSMs and their families. That centralized point could also serve an important public-facing

role to ensure that veteran and military spouse employment remains a priority in the country.

- **Establish a permanent task force to consolidate private, public, and nonprofit coordination.** This recommendation could establish a permanent task force to bring together private, public, and nonprofit stakeholders, review the effectiveness and impact of transition programs, and make recommendations for future action.
- **Collaborate on Marketplace of Resources.** Working across the private and public sectors, the permanent task force should identify best in class resources and tools for TSMs and help to populate a centralized marketplace, like the VET Roadmap. The one-stop-shop for resources will help TSMs navigate the sea of resources and tools to find the right resource or tool at the right time.
- **Expand formal programs and interaction between TSMs and private, public, and nonprofit organizations earlier in the transition cycle (1-year).** This recommendation could be co-led by the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Labor (DOL) with stakeholder representation across the private and nonprofit sectors to identify opportunities for increased collaboration. Additional studies may need to be conducted, programs may need to be updated or established, or new policies may need to be enacted. The proposed leads for this recommendation include DoD-TVPO and DOL VETS.
- **Establish a study on existing private-public partnerships to identify and/or mitigate/eliminate barriers for TSM and veteran employment services.** This study requires participation across the public, private, and nonprofit organizations to propose solutions to reduce employment barriers for TSMs. Recommendations could include establishing or revising existing programs, implementing policy changes, and improving data collection and sharing. This recommendation impacts each phase of the veteran employee lifecycle and the proposed lead to sponsor and fund this study is the Executive Branch.

Expand Data Collection, Sharing, and Analysis

Veteran employment data presents an incomplete picture and does not show associated challenges at each phase of the veteran employee lifecycle. Analysis needs to be done to understand any differences with civilian employment data and effort needs to be made to leverage existing DoD data.

- **Create a centralized repository where private, public, and nonprofit organizations can access current data, research, and promote dissemination of leading practices and benchmarks.** The permanent task force should analyze the types of data that would help companies and organizations as they work to better understand the transition process and create a centralized database available for research and studies. This recommendation would help ensure data consistency and provide a fuller picture of the transition process.
- **Create a "Veteran Economic Health Index" providing the ability to accurately measure multiple indicators of economic health and well-being for veterans, including unemployment and underemployment.** Increased data collection, policy changes, and creation of a program office are required to implement this recommendation which will capture data across each phase of the veteran employee lifecycle. The proposed lead should be BLS in tight consultation with employers.
- **Launch a study to determine leading practices and benchmarks related to data and resource sharing among private, public, and nonprofit sectors within the veteran employment arena.** This recommendation requires funding for a study and increased data collection across each phase of the veteran employee lifecycle. The proposed lead for this recommendation is the Executive Branch.

Expand the Use of Apprenticeship, Fellowship, and Internship Programs

Task force members had a positive view of current efforts and these programs should be scaled to include more TSMs and employers. The “try before you buy” approach gives service members exposure to civilian employment and in many instances leads to job offers.

- **Identify opportunities to expand current programs and initiate new apprenticeship/ fellowship/ internship opportunities for TSMs and veterans to support placement and retention.** This recommendation requires increased support among employers, the DoD, and DOL and affects the transition and recruiting and hiring phases. DOL is the proposed lead for this recommendation. A specific recommendation for DOL was identified by working group members – the Secretary of Labor should write a memorandum that states employers who participate in the Career Skills Program are not in violation of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- **Create new skills-bridge programs to align knowledge, skills, and abilities to career paths of interest.** Service members and veterans need assistance translating their skills to the private sector and need to understand how their knowledge and abilities align to industry jobs. The nonprofit sector should lead this recommendation and it should be targeted during the transition and hiring and recruiting phases.

Create and Expand DoD Programs

Task force members identified opportunities to expand skills programs and the Soldier for Life program.

- **Create incentive programs for DoD Commanders to integrate Career Skills Programs into the transition lifecycle that better translate TSM knowledge, skills, and abilities into private sector opportunities.** There needs to be greater accountability across the services to ensure that military commanders prioritize transition services well before a TSM leaves the service. In addition to TAP, TSMs should be required to attend an on-base hiring event or training program to better understand available opportunities in the civilian sector.
- **Empower Transition Programs Across the Services.** The services need to provide a consistent level of services with their transition programs. The services should adopt models similar to the Army's *Soldier for Life* program

and empower their programs to make transition a priority for commanders at all levels. DoD should conduct a feasibility study and consider more specific Directives to promote accountability.

Enhance Employer Hiring, Onboarding, and Retention Best Practices

This recommendation aligns to the challenge employers have in recognizing the value of veterans.

- **Create a tailored human resource curriculum targeting the “frozen middle” that educates human resources and hiring managers on the merits of hiring TSMs and veterans.** A study should be commissioned and policies and programs may need to be established to focus on this recommendation. The proposed lead is the private sector.
- **Promote mentoring programs.** Mentoring programs play an invaluable role in helping TSMs during their transition from the military and can be critical in bridging the military-civilian gap. The proposed lead is the private sector.
- **Launch a "Corporate America Has Your Back" marketing campaign to engage TSMs, veterans, and their families.** This program is applicable to the pre-transition phase and across all phases of the veteran employee lifecycle. Funding is required to establish this program and the proposed lead is the private sector.

Identify Opportunities to Customize Transition Assistance

Recommit federal agencies to the vital issue of military service member transition, evaluate existing transition programs, and analyze general veteran initiatives with a transition-focused lens.

- **Tailor transition assistance resource distribution to TSMs based on various demographic, education, training, and skill information.** This recommendation is relevant to the transition and recruiting and hiring phases and could result in a feasibility study, policy changes, data collection, and the creation of a program office. Working across the private and public sectors, the permanent task force should propose changes to TAP that would provide customized assistance to TSMs and provide better industry information to them.
- **Increase the requirement for TSMs to have access to education and training related to private sector opportunities.** Studies will be required to understand employment and future job trends to ensure service members receive relevant training, and

certifications. This recommendation aligns to the transition and recruiting and hiring phases. The proposed lead is the nonprofit sector.

- **Increase industry interaction with service members during the transition process; e.g. TAP Employer Panels.** This recommendation requires a formal program and possibly a DoD directive to ease restrictions on employers seeking access to military bases and relates to the transition and recruiting and hiring phases. The proposed lead for this recommendation is DOL.

Identify Opportunities to Offer Aptitude Testing

Task force members identified an opportunity for service member aptitude and skills assessments that identify civilian employment and career opportunities (i.e. tell a sniper he might be a good project manager).

- **Create a Transition Aptitude Assessment through DoD's Transition to Veterans Program Office (TVPO).** This recommendation requires a study and a project office within DoD to improve transition and recruiting and hiring outcomes. The proposed lead is DoD.
- **Create awareness of and offer personality and business affinity assessments, such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test and Business Chemistry for service members and veterans.** This recommendation requires establishing a program to support service members during the transition phase and to improve recruiting and hiring outcomes. This recommendation could be led by nonprofit organizations.

Task Force Recommendations Across the Veteran Employee Lifecycle

Increase Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Veteran Employment Outcomes	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Establish a centralized point in the White House coordinate activities.				
Establish a permanent task force to consolidate private, public and nonprofit coordination				
Collaborate on Marketplace of Resources				
Expand formal programs and interaction between TSMs and private, public, and nonprofit organizations earlier in the transition cycle (1-year)				
Establish a study on existing private-public partnerships to identify and/or mitigate/eliminate barriers for TSM and veteran employment services				
Expand Data Collection, Sharing, and Analysis	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Create a centralized repository where private, public, and nonprofit organizations can access current data, research, and promote dissemination of leading practices and benchmarks				
Create a "Veteran Economic Health Index" providing the ability to accurately measure multiple indicators of economic health and well-being for veterans, including unemployment and underemployment				
Launch a study to determine leading practices and benchmarks related to data and resource sharing among private, public, and nonprofit sectors within the veteran employment arena				
Expand the Use of Apprenticeship, Fellowship, and Internship Programs	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Identify opportunities to expand current programs and initiate new apprenticeship/ fellowship/ internship opportunities for TSMs and veterans to support placement and retention				
Create new skills-bridge programs to align knowledge, skills, and abilities to career paths of interest				
Create and Expand DoD Programs	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Create incentive programs for DoD Commanders to integrate Career Skills Programs into the transition lifecycle that better translate TSM knowledge, skills, and abilities into private sector opportunities				
Empower Transition Programs Across the Services				
Enhance Employer Hiring, Onboarding, and Retention Best Practices	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Create a tailored human resource curriculum targeting the "frozen middle" that educates HR and hiring managers on the merits of hiring TSMs and veterans				
Promote mentoring programs				
Launch a "Corporate America Has Your Back" marketing campaign to engage TSMs, veterans, and their families				

Identify Opportunities to Customize Transition Assistance	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Tailor transition assistance resource distribution to transitioning service members based on various demographic, education, training, and skill information				
Increase the requirement for TSMs to have access to education and training related to private sector opportunities				
Increase industry interaction with service members during the transition process; e.g. TAP Employer Panels				
Identify Opportunities to Offer Aptitude Testing	Pre-Transition	Recruiting & Hiring	Onboarding & Integration	Retention
Create a Transition Aptitude Assessment through DoD's Transition to Veterans Program Office (TVPO)				
Create awareness of and offer personality and business affinity assessments, such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test and Business Chemistry for service members and veterans				

Conclusion

As American businesses responded to the opportunity to help with the veteran unemployment efforts, many companies focused on high visibility recruitment efforts at the expense of identifying best-fit candidates, integrating new staff, and retaining talented veterans. Today, businesses rank veteran recruitment as one of their top priorities for hiring, behind the recruitment of women and individuals with post-secondary degrees.

As a result of the focus on recruitment, businesses have lagged behind when it comes to developing processes and programs to select the right candidates to effectively onboard, integrate, and retain veteran talent in their workforces. Very few companies have onboarding and mentoring programs geared towards veteran employees and even fewer companies have programs designed to educate non-veteran employees on veteran experiences. In contrast, businesses spend a tremendous amount of capital, both monetarily and intellectual, to build integration efforts of traditional new hires, and, as a result, a gap appears to increase between veterans and their civilian colleagues, exacerbating the perception of veteran employment.

With the arrival of the 45th Administration, a renewed opportunity has arisen to tackle the next set of veteran employment challenges. Synchronizing efforts across the private, public, and nonprofit sectors offer the means to increase efficiency and scale of impact to help our TSMs and veterans find meaningful and sustainable employment. By working together, we can inaugurate a new era of veteran employment, prosperity, and security for generations of service members.

Endnotes

1. Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, "Veterans in the Workplace," 2016. Accessed June 2017 from: https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Veterans%20in%20the%20Workplace_0.pdf
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