

# STAND-TO

ADVANCING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT,  
EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING



GEORGE W. BUSH  
INSTITUTE

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# COLLABORATION AND A COMMON VISION FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS

While every veteran transition looks different, we believe there are three keys to a successful transition from military to civilian life: health and wellbeing, access to education and training, and finding meaningful employment.

As America's post-9/11 veterans and their families navigate these areas, they often encounter a host of complex and interconnected issues. The good news is that our nation has overwhelmingly answered the call to deliver support. One example: more than 45,000 nonprofit organizations, government programs and initiatives, large and small corporations, and millions of individuals are committed to addressing these issues.

But often, these organizations work in isolation, causing confusion and disjointed gaps in service for transitioning veterans and their families.

Well-intentioned as they are, a lack of coordination, integration, and documentation of effectiveness leave veterans and families confused on how to best navigate and connect to resources. And no one singular entity has led the charge to promote collaboration and provide a unified common vision to improve veteran outcomes.

In an effort to foster greater collaboration in the veteran service space, the George W. Bush Institute's Military Service Initiative and more than 70 partner organizations from across the public, private, and non-profit sectors have come together to outline key cohesive priorities and an action plan to drive improved outcomes for veterans and their families.

Our goal is to synchronize efforts and empower every veteran and his or her family to lead a full and meaningful life by achieving optimal health and wellbeing, and leveraging education and employment opportunities.

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## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our men and women in uniform have faced down enemies, liberated millions, and in doing so showed the true compassion of our nation. When they return home, many veterans face struggles with their transition, including loss of purpose and identity, and visible and invisible injuries that require treatment. At the same time, veterans and military families often seek new opportunities that allow them to serve their communities and connect with fellow veterans. Achieving optimal health and wellbeing is multi-faceted, and while not exhaustive, we focus on: physical health, mental and emotional health, purpose and identity, and community and relationships.

Of particular importance to engaging in community and relationships are peer-to-peer connections and organizations. Veterans are sometimes reluctant to ask for help or seek care and support services. And when they do choose to receive support, they often are unsure of where to go or what to expect.

Currently, much of the support that veterans receive occurs outside the VA. For example, in 2014 only 6 million veterans used VA health care demonstrating that a significant burden is being placed on private and community providers for veterans' health needs. Veterans also look to non-governmental organizations to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

Studies have shown that these non-VA health and wellbeing providers may not be comprehensively trained in providing effective treatment specific to the needs of the military and veteran populations.

Shortfalls in the ability to monitor and evaluate performance and quality across the various systems of care is problematic. Many veterans also don't understand the type of care that is available to them. There needs to be more education for all the organizations providing health and wellbeing care to our transitioning veterans and better communication with the veterans about the type of care they can receive.

## EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE READINESS

Nearly half of the veterans transitioning enter higher education services, and two-thirds of them are first generation college students. Research shows that one of the leading motivations for military service is the opportunity to receive a post-service education. However, there is also a common misconception from many institutions that those serving in the military are poor students who do not graduate. With programs like Vocational Rehab and the post-9/11 GI Bill making it easier for veterans to attend school, the onus now falls on the education sector to step up and recruit this valuable population.

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Leading institutions need to have a clearer understanding of who veterans are and how their leadership mindset and unique military skills can benefit the institutions. Increased veteran recruitment, enrollment, and enhanced educational experiences result in successful student veterans in the workforce. Since 2009, veterans have earned over 453,000 degrees and certificates using the GI Bill, but businesses are more inclined to recruit non-service member graduates than graduating student veterans.

## EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To unleash a new era of veteran prosperity, business success, and economic advantage, the public, private, and non-profit sectors must collectively recommit to the employment of transitioning service members, veterans, and military families. To ensure veteran success, there are three interconnected processes across the veteran hiring life cycle that need to be addressed: recruiting and hiring, on-boarding and integration, and retention.

Businesses rank veteran recruitment as one of their top priorities. However, a lack of data makes it difficult to pinpoint and understand veteran economic performance and how businesses can achieve better corporate performance. Anecdotal research has shown that businesses do not have a mature veteran hiring process.

Veteran candidates are not provided the appropriate tools for success, such as effective on-boarding and integration. Furthermore, few businesses provide non-veteran employees education on veteran experiences, causing a wedge in the workplace and affecting integration. More concrete data can help businesses create and develop the necessary programs to enhance veteran performance.

## CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

With clearer data, unified vision, and a leading strategy, we can better serve our veterans and their families in each issue area and collectively as well, while maximizing national effort and resourcing. In doing so, we enhance our national security by contributing to the preservation of the all-volunteer force. We ensure our economic global competitiveness and civic leadership by leveraging a national cadre of business and community leaders who stand ready to continue to serve in new ways, and with a renewed purpose. We bring our military-veteran and civilian populations closer together. And we meet our moral and social obligation to our veterans.

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## STAND-TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The following partner organizations and Task Force members contributed to the Stand-To and the priorities on veteran transition:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)	IVMF
American GI Forum	LaQuinta
Apple	LinkedIn
Arcadia	Lumina
AWP	Marcus Institute for Brain Health   UC Denver
Bank of America	Anschutz Medical Campus
Bernie Marcus Foundation	Meadows Mental Health Institute
Blue Star Families	Microsoft
Bob Woodruff Foundation	Military Family Research Institute
Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation	National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
Call of Duty	National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA)
Center for New American Security	National Council on Disability, West Point/US Army
Charlotte Bridge Home	National Initiative for Arts & Healing in the Military
Clear Path for Veterans	National Association of State Approving Agencies
Cohen Veteran Network	Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
Comcast	Office of Veterans Affairs, City of Chicago
Council of College and Military Educators	Philanthropy Roundtable
Council on Foundations	PNC
Deloitte	Psych Armor
Department of Veterans Affairs	RallyPoint
DogTag Inc.	RAND Corporation
Elizabeth Dole Foundation	SBA
Fastport	Schultz Family Foundation
First Data Corporation	Service King
Give An Hour	STEM Education Coalition
Got Your 6	Team Red White and Blue
HeadStrong Project	
Hilton	
Hiring Our Heroes	
Illinois Joining Forces	

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## STAND-TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, CONT.

Team Rubicon

The American Legion

The Boeing Company

The Mission Continues

The ROA Stars Foundation

USAA

USO

VA Women's Center

Veteran metrics Initiative

Veterans Education Success

Veterans of Foreign War

Veterati

Vice President of Military Partnerships

Vietnam Veterans of America

Walmart

Walmart Foundation

Warrior Canine Connection

Wounded Warrior Project

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