

A woman in a military uniform with a name tag that says "SEMANT" is talking to a man wearing a white hard hat with a "Bullard" logo and a headlamp. They are standing in front of a large metal structure, possibly a storage rack or a building under construction. The background is a grid of metal panels.

LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE FUTURE OF VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

MAY 2022



LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE FUTURE OF VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

It is imperative we learn from our history when it comes to how we honor the military service members who have sacrificed for us all. We are seeing horrific conflicts and a war in Europe, but we must not lose sight of the needs of our veterans who have fought for us over the last two decades of war. How successfully veterans transition after their service is a testament to who we are as a nation and our ability to attract future generations of service members.

The challenges our veterans face when returning home are both complex and interrelated, from housing to mental health to education. One thing is certain however: quality employment provides the greatest benefit for the largest number of veterans and is foundational to righting the current subpar system of veteran support. It is clear that if a veteran finds high-quality employment upon re-entry into civilian life, the other challenges become much more surmountable. A good job means a roof, sustenance, healthcare access, social interaction, and, perhaps most importantly, purpose.

Veterans, especially women and people of color, are a chronically underappreciated talent source in America's civilian workforce. Despite their unparalleled training and expertise, far too many have trouble securing a rewarding job, even now when the U.S. labor market is in dire need of talent. According to Penn State's research on The Veterans Metrics Initiative,¹ a valuable source of data for this report, 61% are either unemployed or underemployed.

As one of the largest private funders of veteran employment, the Call of Duty Endowment believes each and every veteran out of work or underemployed represents a lost opportunity for our society. For thirteen years we've been dedicated to bridging this divide by finding and funding the most effective nonprofit organizations that connect veterans with high-quality jobs. This month, we achieved our long-term goal of helping 100,000 veterans get back to work (for comparison's sake, that's more than half the active personnel in the U.S. Marine Corps). The proof of our impact and what this means for people's lives lies in the numbers:²

¹The Veterans Metrics Initiative –VETERANetwork

²Statistics are from the Call of Duty Endowment's grantee veteran placement reporting.

100K VETERAN PLACEMENTS

\$5.6B

IN ECONOMIC
IMPACT

STARTING SALARIES
CAPTURED

\$64K

AVG STARTING
SALARY

2X NATIONAL AVG ³

87%

FULL-TIME
WORK

80%

6-MONTH
RETENTION RATE

\$547

PER PLACEMENT

1/10 US DEPT OF
LABOR COST

Our mission to place 100,000 veterans has succeeded because our work is based on the rigorously consistent vetting of our [Seal of Distinction program](#). We scour the landscape of more than 44,000 veterans organizations⁴ to find those that quantitatively demonstrate the highest performance at getting veterans back to work in high quality careers. And when we find these organizations, we robustly fund them, coach their leaders, and help them grow.

³ <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEPAINUSA672N>

⁴ According to a Guidestar search in March 2022.

COST PER PLACEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR VS THE CALL OF DUTY ENDOWMENT



We do this important transition work at just a fraction of what the U.S. government spends, while maintaining our high standards. In 2021, the Endowment placed veterans at 1/10th the cost per placement (\$547) of the U.S. Department of Labor's efforts,⁵ demonstrating that best-in-class non-profits vastly outperform the federal government's efforts.

⁵ DOL cost per hire calculation is from the most recent DOL annual report to Congress—dividing the total spend across their veteran employment programs by the number of confirmed hires made by these programs. For the most recent year available (FY20), the math is:

\$172,670,799 (DOL VETS Employment Staff Budget for DVOP, LVER and Consolidated Staff programs) / 29,260 veterans placed = \$5,901 cost per placement.

The Call of Duty Endowment's most recent cost per placement was \$547 (across its 12 grantees), which is 10.7X more cost efficient than DOL's efforts (or approximately 1/10 the cost).



THE PLACEMENT OF 100,000 VETERANS IS A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN OUR ONGOING WORK.

We are marking it by sharing a decade of lessons we have learned with the determination to improve the collective efforts of the key participants in this space: policy makers, funders, employers and veterans themselves. Our hope is that this document, bolstered by new data from TVMI, will be a valuable source of institutional knowledge so the hard-won lessons stemming from the last twenty years of war will ease transition into meaningful careers for future veterans. Our ultimate goal is for every veteran to have the support they need to successfully integrate into our civilian economy and society, which is truly the most meaningful way to thank them for their service.

Below are three overarching lessons we've learned from funding the placement of 100,000 veterans:

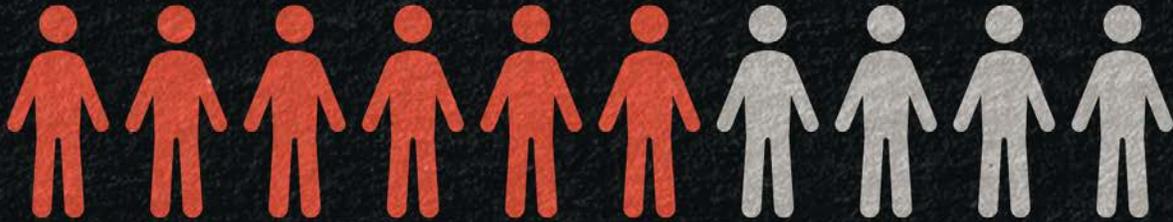
**LESSON #1:
JOB QUALITY⁶ MATTERS A GREAT DEAL.**

**LESSON #2:
TWO SERVICES DRIVE ENORMOUS VALUE FOR VETERANS.**

**LESSON #3:
FEDERAL VETERAN EMPLOYMENT FUNDING MUST CHANGE.**

⁶ We define job quality by a starting salary above the national average, full-time placements, and one-year retention rates above 80%.

61% OF VETERANS ARE UNEMPLOYED OR UNDEREMPLOYED.



LESSON #1:

Job quality matters a great deal. We must do better ensuring employers appreciate the skills and experience veterans possess from their military service. Underemployment is a growing societal problem, but it hits veterans especially hard. It is also a quiet, but devastating challenge to solve, especially now. The pressures of the pandemic hit those who are underemployed first, often losing their already limited hours or underpaid roles.

Underemployment is defined as when an individual has education, experience, or skills beyond the requirements for a job. As stated above, according to TVMI data, 61% of veterans are unemployed or underemployed. Their data also shows that 55% believe that they have more experience than their current job requires. Much of this is attributable to the unusually high level of leadership and responsibility provided to service members at a young age—far in excess of what's common in the civilian economy. This circumstance can be remedied through employer education and training veterans to better communicate the civilian value of their military experience and skills. The exemplary organizations we fund provide this education and training, and are game changers in combating veteran underemployment.

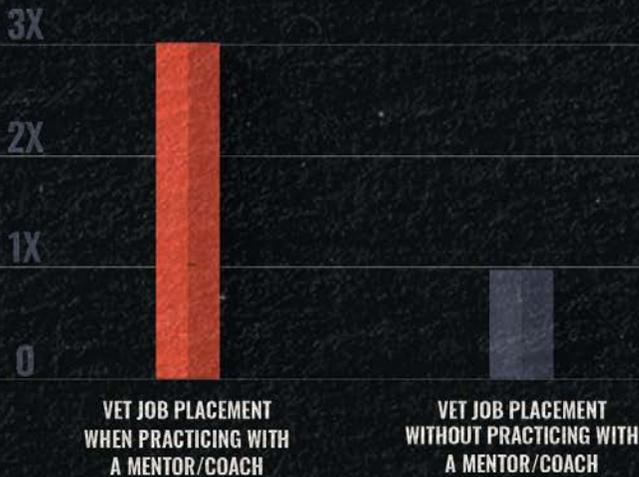
In some cases, simple changes to bureaucratic red tape would also dramatically reduce underemployment in specific sectors. For example, according to Hire Heroes USA, half of former medics and hospital corpsmen who want to continue their medical work cannot find jobs in the U.S. healthcare industry. This is largely due to the fact that the extensive medical training and experience they received in the military does not translate directly to job requirements in the civilian healthcare industry.⁷ By modifying existing state licensure policies to recognize this incredible experience, veterans would be able to perform the jobs they are already trained and qualified to do and advance their careers without having to start their training over.



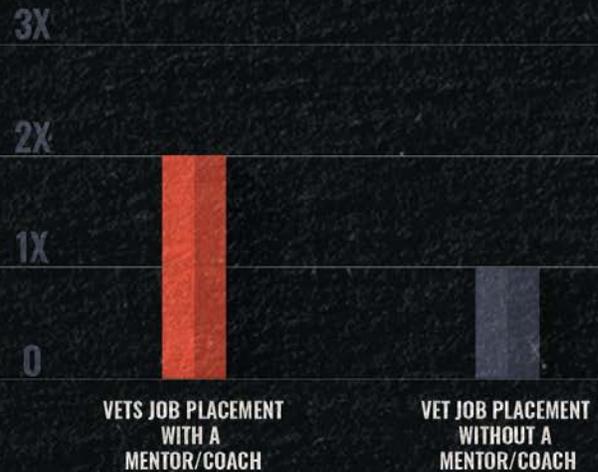
⁷ https://www.hireheroesusa.org/veterans-can-bolster-our-healthcare-system/?fbclid=IwAR2oatyp9glf1lIIGP_cZsK95N37-Ed3CkG018Gd660nq6AAHp8BjirW_ro

VETERANS ARE...

3X MORE LIKELY TO FIND A JOB WHEN A MENTOR OR COACH HELPS WITH INTERVIEW PRACTICE.



2X AS LIKELY TO SECURE A JOB WHEN A MENTOR OR COACH HELPS TO WRITE THEIR RESUMES.



LESSON #2:

Two services drive enormous value for veterans. TVMI data reveals that even modest efforts to assist veterans in transitioning to the civilian workforce have a dramatic impact, especially with women and people of color:

- Veterans are nearly three times more likely to find a job if they used a mentor or coach to practice interviewing
- Veterans are twice as likely to find a job if they used a mentor or coach to help write their resume

HELP WITH EMPLOYMENT IS THE FORM OF ASSISTANCE MOST REQUESTED BY TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS.

It's no surprise therefore that help with employment is the form of assistance most requested by transitioning service members, according to TVMI. A successful transition into a high-quality career reduces the governmental costs to help veterans with many other needs including housing and healthcare.

EMPLOYMENT IS THE LOWEST FUNDED OF ANY VETERAN PROGRAM AREA

AT LESS THAN 0.1% OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S
\$300 BILLION VETERAN SPEND.

LESSON #3:

Federal veteran employment funding must change. Since almost every transitioning service member needs a civilian job, prioritizing and reallocating the government's employment spend will drive the most overall benefits for the most veterans. Currently, the federal government is vastly underfunding the employment of veterans; it's the lowest funded of any major veteran program area at less than 1/10 of 1 percent of the U.S. Government's approximately \$300 billion veteran spend. A doubling of this spend--deployed to proven organizations in the nonprofit sector--would have a transformative impact and still represent a pittance of the overall veteran budget. It is also obvious that early, successful career intervention for transitioning service members and veterans has a multiplier effect in reducing the need for much costlier housing and mental health programs. For example, employed veterans are much more likely to provide for their own housing and have lower levels of depression. As, Dr. Peter Kramer, MD, the noted professor of clinical psychiatry at Brown University put it in discussing veteran suicide, "There is no substitute for what jobs offer in the way of structure, support and meaning."⁸

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/11/20/how-can-we-prevent-military-suicides/the-role-of-unemployment-in-veteran-suicide>



HIRE HEROES USA



We are grateful for the steadfast work of the carefully selected veterans organizations we partner with, their hundreds of dedicated employees, and the generous donors who make our collective progress possible. We applaud the government officials who have championed the cause of high-quality veteran employment and hope that more will follow their lead. Most importantly, we stand in awe of the millions of veterans who have sacrificed in service and are now transitioning to civilian life. It is a belief in their unrivaled talent and capacity that drives our mission.

While 100,000 veterans placed is large in its totality, behind every number is a story of success. One such example is Timothy Hobbs Jr, Sergeant First Class, US Army (Ret.), a former Army Combat Medic now living in Elizabethton, Tennessee who completed four combat deployments during his career. Thanks to the assistance he received, SFC Hobbs is currently enjoying a meaningful career as a senior healthcare analyst at a major company. "Thousands of veterans remained out of work and underutilized when their country needed them the most," wrote SFC Hobbs last year in an Atlanta Constitution Journal op-ed. "Veteran Service Organizations that are working hard to help veterans find work deserve more of our support."



- SERGEANT FIRST CLASS TIMOTHY HOBBS JR., U.S. ARMY (RET.)





FOR POLICY MAKERS

Transition needs to be a cornerstone of the mission of the Department of Defense—that is not presently the case. Making world-class service members is not enough, we need to send into the world world-class, job-ready veterans. This is a national security imperative that demands higher prioritization. The paucity of the transition budget, the elimination of the Chairman’s Office of Reintegration, and the non-personalized and inadequate Transition Assistance Program (TAP)⁹ signal how undervalued transition services are within the federal government. Veterans who struggle to adapt to civilian life, through no fault of their own, don’t reflect well on the military’s reputation as a desirable career choice and deteriorate the ability to fill future recruiting quotas. To reverse course, we offer the following policy recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Provide much better veteran employment data.

As the axiom goes, if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it. Accurate and timely data on veteran economic health would help federal policymakers, state and local governments, philanthropists, nonprofits, and employers make wiser decisions about how to allocate resources in support of veteran employment outcomes. Unfortunately, our current measures of veteran economic well-being that come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) fall far short of what is needed. The BLS data on veterans is inaccurate, not actionable and gives a false sense of achievement. They are insufficient to drive effective resource allocation in three ways:

⁹ According to a 2019 study of TAP by the Veterans Administration, around 55 percent of recently transitioned veterans found it difficult to translate their military experience to civilian job requirements and only about a third had civilian employment lined up prior to transition. Pages 40-45. This is a completely avoidable problem through personalized career counseling services.

- The BLS data is opinion-based,¹⁰ rather than derived from actual employment outcomes like reported payroll data, and hinges upon veterans self-identifying, which often does not occur, especially in the case of women.¹¹
- The BLS fails to capture the widespread issue of veteran underemployment. For example, if a veteran makes even \$1 a week through work, it counts them as fully employed.
- Finally, the BLS indicator can only measure employment at the state and national level—the situation may be dire in Sacramento and excellent in Los Angeles, but it would be impossible to tell, and decision makers are left empty handed on where to direct employment and other types of assistance. Understanding where veterans have the lowest earnings and employment rates compared to non-veterans would help stakeholders better direct their job placement resources, allocating resources based on demonstrated, near-real time payroll data, rather than on high-level, opinion-based data. Use cases could extend beyond employment to food insecurity and perhaps even suicide prevention.

USING EXISTING, NON-PUBLISHED GOVERNMENT DATA, WE PROPOSE DEVELOPING A MORE USEFUL INDICATOR OF VETERAN EMPLOYMENT—ONE THAT CAN REGULARLY UPDATE VETERAN EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS DOWN TO THE ZIP CODE-LEVEL

Using existing, non-published government data, we propose developing a more useful indicator of veteran employment—one that can regularly update veteran earnings and employment status down to the zip code-level. We believe the best way to accomplish this is to match veteran records (through Social Security Numbers from the VADIR¹² database) with near-real-time payroll and geographic data from the Social Security Administration (SSA). This effort would not require accessing any personally identifiable information (PII) or removing raw data from any government agency. It would provide population-level summaries at the zip-code level and higher. The cost of this effort is trivial, as it simply involves connecting two existing databases and the benefit of publishing this correlated data is enormous. By having the VA and SSA collaborate on this effort and regularly publishing the results, we will have the tool necessary to make smarter investments in our veterans' economic well-being.

¹⁰ The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Unemployment Rate stems from an opinion-based question in the monthly Current Population Survey conducted by the Census. Specifically, 'Last week, were you paid for work?'

¹¹ "Experiences of women veterans within the private sector: Examining the intersection of gender and veteran status" Human Resource Development Quarterly. By Milar Hirudayaraj, 2019. Page 484

¹² VA/DoD Identity Repository (VADIR). The VADIR database was established to support a One VA/DoD data-sharing initiative to consolidate data transfers between DoD and VA. DoD's Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) stages shared data as defined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and transmits data to VADIR. The VADIR data are used to assist in determining veteran benefits.

COST PER PLACEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR vs CALL OF DUTY ENDOWMENT



Recommendation #2: Reallocate government funding to support the most effective veteran employment programs.

We are not advocating for more government funding of veterans services overall, but rather reallocating government funding to proven, non-governmental employment programs. It is clear that employment-focused nonprofits have driven documented results far superior to programs administered by the Department of Labor and the Veterans Administration. The best nonprofit organizations place veterans at 1/10th the cost of the Department of Labor's efforts. Federal government leaders should recognize that their own transition programs are not working well and instead reallocate funding to proven services in the non-profit sector.

CASE IN POINT, ALL VETERANS ARE REQUIRED TO GO THROUGH TAP, YET TVMI'S DATA SHOWS THAT WITHIN THE THREE MONTHS OF TRANSITIONING, APPROXIMATELY 60% OF VETERANS USE ANOTHER NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO HELP THEM TRANSITION. THIS USAGE DATA CLEARLY INDICATES THAT TAP IS FALLING FAR SHORT OF WHAT VETS NEED. GIVEN TAP'S "ONE TO MANY" INSTRUCTION MODEL, THIS IS NOT SURPRISING. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONALIZED COUNSELING SERVICES.

Recommendation #3 : Provide individualized transition support.

Job placement needs among transitioning service members and veterans are highly varied. We must do a better job providing customized support to ensure post-transition career success while leveraging veterans' skills and experiences to tackle our nation's challenges.

As a part of TAP, linking soon-to-be veterans with a coordinated care and navigation system (e.g., AmericaServes, Combined Arms) would increase the likelihood of a smooth transition by identifying risk factors early and providing targeted support, interventions, and components. While TAP may provide the most basic start for a positive transition journey, it is not sufficiently personalized and doesn't fulfill the mission of supporting veterans after military separation. An enlisted infantryman with a GED and a nuclear engineering officer with a masters degree get largely the same transition program.

CASE IN POINT, VETERANS ARE FAR MORE LIKELY TO FIND A JOB (2-3 TIMES) IF THEY HAVE INDIVIDUALIZED HELP WITH INTERVIEWING AND RESUME WRITING. YET, NOTABLY THE GOVERNMENT TAP PROGRAM PROVIDES NEITHER. THE NONPROFIT PROGRAMS THAT WE SUPPORT PROVIDE FREE, INDIVIDUALIZED, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING AND MENTORSHIP, AS OPPOSED TO TAP'S ONE INSTRUCTOR TO MANY SERVICE MEMBERS CLASSROOM-BASED APPROACH.

Recommendation #4: Focus the greatest effort on the veteran population that can benefit most from help, specifically veterans of color and women veterans.

The federal government should double down on services geared towards women veterans and veterans of color as well as junior enlisted. TVMI data shows that these veterans struggle more with the transition and may benefit from additional services or outreach.

- 10% of junior enlisted (E1-E4) are not employed and looking for work
- 10% of male veterans of color are not employed and looking for work
- 14% of women veterans are not employed and looking for work
- 22% of women veterans of color are not employed and looking for work





FOR DONORS

As the largest private funder of veteran employment services over the past twelve years, we've learned many lessons that other donors may find helpful in this field. We provide the following recommendations with a sincere desire to improve and expand quality services for all veterans.

Recommendation #1: Define your focus to drive real social impact.

The Call of Duty Endowment's focus is narrow and deep. We are dedicated strictly to the issue of veteran employment rather than spreading ourselves thin across the many other worthy veteran service areas. As a result, we have gained a deep understanding of and disproportionate impact within the veteran employment space.

By having a focused approach, not only are you able to more easily quantify impact, but you also can marshal substantial resources to address systemic issues with confidence.

Recommendation #2: Add value beyond your funds.

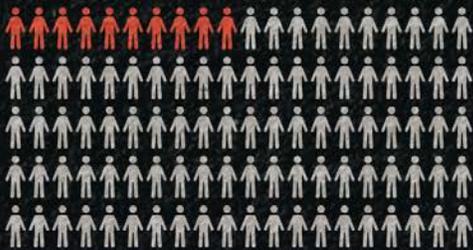
Funders can add operational value to their grantee partners by identifying critical trends across the space that individual non-profits in the trenches can miss, as well as helping grantees collectively and proactively adapt to them.

For example, the veteran groups most in need of high-quality employment help are enlisted veterans of color and women veterans. According to TVMI data, they struggle more with the transition and may benefit from additional services or outreach.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD DOUBLE DOWN ON SERVICES GEARED TOWARDS THE MOST TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

10%

OF MALE VETERANS OF COLOR ARE NOT EMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK



14%

OF WOMEN VETERANS ARE NOT EMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK



22%

OF WOMEN VETERANS OF COLOR ARE NOT EMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK



TVMI data: junior enlisted, women and veterans of color are more likely to have difficulty with employment 2.5 years post separation:

- 10% of junior enlisted (E1-E4) are not employed and looking for work
- 10% of men of color are not employed and looking for work
- 14% of women are not employed and looking for work
- 22% of women of color are not employed and looking for work

FOR DONORS (CONTINUED)

CASE IN POINT: WHEN WE NOTICED TWO OF OUR GRANTEEES WERE HAVING MUCH GREATER SUCCESS PLACING WOMEN VETERANS, WE WORKED WITH THEM TO DISTILL WHY THEY WERE BEING SUCCESSFUL, THEN ASKED THEM TO TEACH THEIR APPROACHES TO ALL OUR GRANTEEES. WITHIN A FEW QUARTERS, ALL OF THE GRANTEEES WERE HAVING GREATER SUCCESS HELPING WOMEN VETERANS, AND NONE HAVE REGRESSED.

Recommendation #3: Big veteran nonprofit brands do not necessarily equal high impact.

Of the veterans we helped secure a job last year, 93% were post-9/11 veterans, and for demographic reasons, that proportion will continue to increase. Yet many of the veteran serving organizations that are household names today were founded generations ago, and have been slow to meet the needs of today’s veterans. Conversely, many of the new generation of veteran serving nonprofits have glossy branding, but cannot consistently demonstrate quantifiable social impact. Do not let compelling marketing serve as your guide to grantees. We continuously see major funders make this mistake. As a serious funder, you need a thorough root cause analysis of your issue space that pinpoints areas where philanthropy can be game changing. Only then are you ready to find high quality grantees. If you don’t do this, you should not be issuing grants in the extremely crowded veteran nonprofit space.

Key Career Progress Milestones	Pre-departure activities	Assessment and Planning				Personal Marketing		Ongoing Support	
		Ambition Assessment	Gap Analysis	Skills Plan	Resume	Interview Prep	Interview Conduct	New Job On-boarding	Success / Fulfillment
Required Activities	Attend Transition Assistance Program; obtain career information	Assess; explore options; ID geography, industry and function	Understand skills needed vs. possessed; understand where opportunities exist (geo., ind., funct.)	Create realistic education and/or training plan, as necessary	Translate RELEVANT skills and experience into industry vernacular	Conduct realistic practice/simulation; dress and groom properly; change mannerisms (first names, no Sir/Ma'am)	Obtain interview; earn job offer	Stay in touch and periodically measure success (longevity, promotion, happiness)	Learning, professional growth, rewards, promotion and retention
Failure Point(s)	Information overload; lack of match between vet and best fit programs	No systematic approaches; no exposure to broad options (choose skill- or location-fit rather than "dream field")	No reality check provided	Poor educational planning; selection based on familiarity rather than needs or abilities	Translation of military experience into industry-relevant verbiage	Does not happen with knowledgeable person (e.g., experienced recruiter or hiring manager)	Untargeted job search; lack of prep for job fairs; reticence to showcase individual talents; use of military vernacular	Adapting to civilian work norms; negotiating compensation/title	Asking for help; career management
Best Practice(s)	On base workshops that supplement TAP prior to departure	Formal fit assessment that provides range of options	Formal counseling based off assessment results	Formal counseling and efficient use of GI Bill / VA educational benefits	Formal training and iterative work with resume counselor	Multiple practice interviews with a knowledgeable coach	Extensive use of networks and effective translation of military experience into civilian terms	Negotiation skills; assignment of an industry mentor	Establishment of realistic goals and ongoing work with industry mentor
Well-served?	Somewhat	No	No	No	Somewhat	Somewhat	No	No	Somewhat
Endowment Opportunity/Fit	Low/Medium	High/Medium	High/High	High/High	Low/Medium	High/Medium	Medium/Medium	High/Medium	High/Low

THIS IS THE RESULT OF OUR INITIAL ROOT CAUSE EXERCISE CONDUCTED IN 2013. IT WAS A GAME CHANGING, "HOCKEY STICK" MOMENT FOR US.



Recommendation #4: Devise a systemic approach to finding high performing veteran nonprofits.

A hallmark of the Call of Duty Endowment is our [Seal of Distinction](#), the product of a rigorous screening process in place since 2013 that consistently evaluates all our applicants and current grantees. This approach, in collaboration with Deloitte, allows us to find those organizations that demonstrate the highest level of impact and integrity in placing veterans in quality [jobs](#).



Recommendation #5. Demand accountability from your grantees.

Trust-based philanthropy is largely nonsense. No responsible business or investor would write a large check to a company without expectations of measurable results, yet somehow this sensible ethic is abandoned by many donors whose expectation should be a tangible social return. True in business and true in driving social impact. Every one of our grant agreements requires a measurable impact and progress against that goal is measured quarterly. The focus on results drives improved performance from our grantees year after year. For example, Hire Heroes USA rises to the top of our elite group of grantees because they consistently drive measurable impact and are a learning organization that constantly seeks to improve. They were tiny when we first invested in them in 2011—now they're the largest and most effective non-profit in the space. They've built agile information architecture, thorough client case management, strong accounting standards, and financial and social impact transparency. This sophistication built gradually, but as their largest funder for many years, our feedback loop undoubtedly helped spur their improvement. Our quarterly measurement approach ensures similar accountability with all our partners and drives highly focused and productive performance improvement conversations with them. When nonprofits do not respond to our feedback, we stop supporting them.



FOR EMPLOYERS

Too many veterans are sidelined from meaningful employment because employers don't understand the value they offer their company or organization. Despite their extensive skills and unparalleled experience in difficult operating environments, veterans are a chronically underappreciated talent source. According to data from TVMI, the quality among veterans that is most often overlooked is the leadership experience they bring to a civilian job. Data from CEB (now Gartner) research shows us that veterans perform at higher levels and have lower turnover rates as compared to non-veteran employees.¹³

Hiring veterans remains a challenge due to fundamental misconceptions about their experience. For example, medics and corpsmen each receive a minimum of \$100,000 of initial medical training in the military. When their service is complete, after years of field and clinical experience, many want to work in the civilian medical field, [yet according to Hire Heroes USA](#), half are unable to find jobs in the U.S. healthcare industry. Inexplicably, often they must start their training all over again to be licensed to work in the civilian world.

Veterans that are out of work or underemployed represent an incredible lost opportunity for our country. We call upon employers to step up and follow these recommendations:

¹³ According to CEB (now Gartner), veterans are 4% more productive and 2% more likely to stay at their company than non-veterans.

Recommendation #1: Set a hiring goal for veterans and broadcast it throughout your organization.

Setting a hiring goal for veterans is a crucial step. As you know, employees respond well to specific quantifiable targets. And by making it known throughout the organization, help will surface from many directions. A recent study on ‘hidden workers’ – aspiring workers who are screened out of consideration – published by Harvard Business School underscores the need for “mounting a sustained commitment” to “ensure that the incumbent workforce understands the underlying business case.”¹⁴

If you need assistance in setting your goal and improving your outcomes, you simply need to connect with the veteran service organizations that have earned our [Seal of Distinction](#). As mentioned above, the Call of Duty Endowment bestows the Seal of Distinction upon nonprofits that demonstrate the highest level of effectiveness, efficiency and integrity in placing veterans in quality jobs. We assess the landscape of more than 44,000 veteran organizations¹⁵ to find those that quantitatively demonstrate the highest performance. Each of these organizations provide superb, individualized assistance with resume writing and interview skills. And when we find these organizations, we fund them, coach their leaders, and help them grow.

Recommendation #2: Improve your veteran data.

Improving outcomes first requires obtaining accurate data. Ensure your human resource systems are capturing not only how many veterans are at your company, but where they are at each stage of the hiring pipeline, and when they leave your company, understand why.

Recommendation #3: Thoughtfully strengthen your veteran hiring pipeline

It’s critical to understand the specific points within your hiring pipeline or “funnel” where you are not succeeding at bringing in enough qualified veterans. Improving your veteran hiring program requires isolating the problem. For instance, if you are not bringing in enough candidates at the top of the hiring funnel, you likely have a sourcing problem which, for example, may be solved by more targeted ads on veteran-centric platforms.

¹⁴ “HIDDEN WORKERS: UNTAPPED TALENT; How Leaders Can Improve Hiring Practices to Uncover Missed Talent Pools, Close Skill Gaps, and Improve Diversity” page 5.

¹⁵ According to Guidestar search in March 2022.

Conversely, if veterans are not being chosen for interviews by hiring managers, you may have an issue with inherent bias where these managers do not understand the value of hiring veterans. This calls for greater advocacy from recruiters and training for hiring managers.

TVMI data shows that women veterans and people of color will benefit from additional recruitment services or outreach. Two and a half years after their military service is complete, 10% of male veterans of color are not employed and looking for work, 14% of women veterans are not employed and looking for work, and 22% of veteran women of color are not employed and looking for work.

Recommendation #4: Plug the leaks in your “retention boat”

It is not enough to recruit veterans effectively; you must also focus on tailored on-boarding and engagement efforts if you hope for them to thrive and stay at your organization. As detailed in the introduction, according to TVMI, 61% of veterans nationwide identify as underemployed, meaning they have the education, experience, or skills beyond requirements for a job; 55% believe that they have more experience than the job they hold.

If veterans are leaving your company at a greater rate than the general employee population, you need to understand why and build appropriate fixes. This could include targeted mentoring or training programs, for example. And if you don't already have an active and robust veteran employee resource group, the sense of disconnection that this would normally address is likely one of the reasons your veterans may be struggling.

CASE IN POINT: TVMI DEMONSTRATES THAT LACK OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT (27.0%), INADEQUATE COMPENSATION (22.9%), AND MISMATCH BETWEEN JOB AND SKILLS/EDUCATION (14.8%) WERE NOTABLE REASONS FOR VETERANS LEAVING A JOB.



FOR VETERANS

Despite your unparalleled training, extensive expertise and proven commitment to your country, too many of your fellow veterans are out of work or underutilized. This has been the case even during a pandemic when our country needed your help most. The Call of Duty Endowment has funded the placement of more than 100,000 veterans into high-quality jobs. If you count yourself unemployed or underemployed, after twelve years of experience, we offer the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1: You have valuable leadership skills that employers need.

You have enormous value in the civilian economy. No matter what you did in the military your training, leadership skills and discipline will be an asset to almost any organization. You need to learn how to convey this value in ways civilian employers will understand.

Recommendation #2: Start early.

We recommend that you begin planning your civilian transition well before you complete your active duty service—a year out is NOT too early! Only about one third of transitioning service members have civilian jobs before the exit active service—that's not good. Don't wait for your TAP class or until you have left the military to start. You can begin by investing in the discovery of what you want to do. Talk with your friends who transitioned out before you. [Find a mentor](#) in a field that interests you. Build a civilian network on [LinkedIn](#). And most importantly...

Recommendation #3: Get help – for free.

Every veteran needs help transitioning to the civilian workforce. Despite all you have done in the military, few employers automatically understand the kind of skills and leadership experience you have – and HOW it will benefit their organizations. According to TVMI data, employers too often overlook the leadership experience you already have. It is on you, to ensure your value is clear. *Sound hard? It is if you haven't done it before.* The fact is that everyone needs help with this translation, and doing so will yield tremendous results. The data shows that with a little personalized help with interviewing and resume writing you are nearly three times more likely to land a job.

As veterans, you should never pay for those services. Your country owes you this assistance and [the veterans organizations we work with](#) are proven as the best in the US and UK. They will help you for free. [Get help from them.](#)

Recommendation #4: Get the job you want, not just a job you can do.

Underemployment is a real issue among veterans, with 61% reporting they are in a job that is beneath their experience and skillset. Avoid the trap of accepting a job that you “can” do because of your current skills, as opposed to pursuing the job you want. Our [highly vetted partner organizations](#) will work directly with you to match your skills and experience to the job you want while helping you market your value. And if you don't have the skills for your dream job, they'll advise you on how best to obtain them.

THANK YOU

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