

ACVETEO - ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT,
TRAINING AND EMPLOYER OUTREACH

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

January 16, 2020

SUMMARY MINUTES

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND
EMPLOYER OUTREACH (ACVETEO)

U.S. Department of Labor
Frances T. Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

PARTICIPANTS:

Eric Eversole, Chairman

Sam Shellenberger, Deputy Assistant Secretary, VETS

John Lowry, Assistant Secretary of Labor, VETS

Gregory Green, Assistant DFO, VETS

Randy Smith, Hire Vets Medallion Program

Stan Kurtz, Small Business Administration

Jeff Hall, Disabled American Veterans

Tony Lowe, Veterans of Foreign Wars

James Schmeling, Student Veterans of America

Lou Celli, American Legion

Darrell Roberts, SMART Union

Stephen Parker, National Governors Association

Kayla Williams, Center For a New American Security

Mike Lord, U.S. Department of Defense

Gary Harter, Utah Dept. of Vets and Military Affairs

Lori Adams, NASWA

Jim Lorraine, America's Warrior Partnership

Nathan Williams, Veterans Affairs

Eric Brown, OPM

Mark Toal, DOL VETS

Michael McDermott, American Legion

Robert Sanders, Veterans Affairs, VBA

Keith Nattrass, Military & Veterans Affairs, GMC

Bill Offutt, Victory

Paul Johnston, Veteran

Kristopher Rick, DOL VETS

The January 16, 2020 meeting of ACVETEO, the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach, began at 9:06 a.m.

Sam Shellenberger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for DOL VETS, enthusiastically welcomed the group, and introduced the new Assistant Secretary of Labor for VETS, Mr. John Lowry.

Mr. Lowry, fresh off a nearly two year confirmation process, had already managed to catch up on the Committee's activities and had read the group's latest report and recommendations. He spoke of his gratitude at having finally assumed his duties, and of his agreement with the group's priorities-serving the military's under-served population. Military spouses fit into this category, as well as veterans who in civilian life now live in rural and remote areas, and/or Native American tribal lands.

As is often the case, resources are limited due to budgetary constraints. **Mr. Lowry** promoted the use of new, ever-evolving technology and creative innovations, in order to help overcome this lack of resources. He also emphasized the need for improvement in the actual delivery of services. Citing his manufacturing background, he likes the idea of getting better on a day-by-day, incremental basis. **Mr. Lowry** finished by saying he was a big fan of the Hire Vets Medallion Program. **Mr. Jim Lorraine**, here today representing America's Warrior Partnership, was this year's recipient of the Platinum Medallion.

Chairman Eric Eversole reminded the group of the site visit this afternoon to the American Job Center. Committee members and guests then introduced themselves. **Gregory Green**, Assistant DFO, had arranged for a photo to be taken of the committee members with **Mr. Lowry**.

After the photo was taken, **Mr. Shellenberger** spoke of the many changes currently underway with the Transfer Assistance Program, or TAP. **Mr. Lowry** had visited the Office of Management and Budget the day before, in order to discuss budget and policy issues, and **Mr. Shellenberger** reported that the homeless veterans re-integration program had received a large increase in funding. More good news - as part of TAP services, and in order to further assist with the transition from military to civilian life, the VA is now making three phone calls to veterans in their first year after leaving the military, to see how they are doing, answer questions, get feedback, etc.

Mr. Randy Smith, of the Hire Vets Medallion Program, spoke of the cooperation of federal and state agencies, such as the Office of Disability Employment Policy, or ODEP, and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, or NASWA, in assisting our veterans. Hirevets.gov has been very successful in getting veterans to sign up for its' newsletter, and has led to a huge increase in the number of veterans e-mail addresses. Businesses who support and hire veterans were treated to an awards ceremony at DOL headquarters in November - over 160 employers attended.

The minutes from the September 2019 meeting were approved by a chorus of ayes from the members. **Chairman Eversole** mentioned the high number of new ACVETEO members, and called on **Mark Toal**, of DOL VETS, to speak on the 2019 report.

Mr. Toal is encouraged by the cooperation of federal and state agencies in their delivery of veteran services, as well as the continuing reduction in the veterans unemployment rate, now down to 3.1 percent in 2019.

There was much group discussion as to the relevance of military service experience as training for civilian jobs. There is continuing interest in the underserved areas of the veteran population - again, the veterans who live in rural areas and / or tribal lands, and of course, military spouses. Interest was expressed in having a USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Act) team member provide a briefing at the next meeting.

Michael McDermott, of the American Legion, pointed out that approximately twenty percent of our military force is deployed outside of the United States. There is an even higher rate of unemployment/under-employment among military spouses outside the U.S., for various reasons. It is extremely hard for a military spouse to start his or her own business in these foreign posts.

Back in the U.S., job apprenticeship programs are still available. They are most successful close to, or around, military bases/installations, and in urban areas. Again, the under-served population lives in mostly remote and/or rural areas.

Mr. Green then switched topics to the upcoming ACVETEO meetings. At the next meeting, probably in March, sub-committees will be formed, with each having a leader as well as an events liaison.

Mr. Shellenberger reminded the Committee not to overstep its legislative authority, as defined by the group charter, in pursuit of stated recommendations.

There was more discussion on the timing of the next two meetings. **Mr. Green** will send out the digital poll to members before dates are finalized, but meetings in March and May are likely. The sub-committees will be formed at the March meeting, and they will report back to the full committee in May.

Mr. Bill Offutt, a local historian and veteran, spoke of his Victory group, which publishes the magazine "G.I. Jobs". The latest issue deals mostly with the familiar topic of military spouse employment.

After an inquiry, **Mr. Toal** pointed out that despite not having a representative at the table, The U.S. Department of Agriculture does indeed concern itself with serving the veteran population. **Mr. Toal** works with one person in particular at the USDA, and pointed out that their programs can be found on a link to the veterans.gov website.

There was no further public comment, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.