

**Department of Labor  
Veterans' Employment and Training Service  
Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and  
Employment Outreach (ACVETEO) Meeting  
Room N4437, 2000 Independence Ave, NW, Washington, DC  
June 11, 2019**

**Minutes**

**Participants**

Eversole, Eric, Chairman, ACVETEO  
Green, Gregory, Assistant DFO  
Adams, Lori, ACVETEO  
Brown, Eric, ACVETEO  
Bethards, Lois, American Indian Center of Arkansas  
Coleman, Nicole, ACVETEO  
DeJesus, Ariel, ACVETEO  
Frugoli, Pam, DOL  
Gallucci, Ryan, VFW  
Garcia, Amy, ACVETEO  
Green, Timothy, Office of Strategic Outreach, DOL VETS  
Jukuri, Jon, ACVETEO  
Lowe, Tony, VFW  
Miller, Matthew, Deputy Assistant Secretary, DOL VETS  
Miller, Mike, DOL  
Slater, Mike, DOL  
Stoddard, Michael, ACVETEO  
Storch, Justin, ACVETEO  
Toal, Mark, DOL VETS  
Winter, Tim, DOL VETS  
Coppes, Mitchell, Goodwill Industries  
Prach, Ronald, Drach Consulting  
Shellenberger, Sam, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations, DOL  
Denton, Ivan, DOL VETS  
Shepard, Robert, DOL  
Temiguel, Maria, DOL  
Smith, Randall, DOL  
Kurtz, Stan, ACVETEO  
Celli, Louis, ACVETEO  
Harter, Gary, ACVETEO  
Johnson, Pamela, ACVETEO  
Lorraine, Jim, ACVETEO  
Williams, Kayla, ACVETEO  
Schmeling, James, ACVETEO  
Sanders, Robert, ACVETEO

**Participants (cont.)**

Hall, Jeff, ACVETEO

Gagliardi, Adele, ACVETEO

Warner, Rose, ACVETEO

Roberts, Darrell, ACVETEO

Schwartz, Robert, ACVETEO

McDermott, Michael, ACVETEO

Nattrass, Keith, ACVETEO

Myers, Vanessa, DOL

Button, Chris, DOL

Rochell, John, VA

**Presenting**

Blank, Andrew, BLS

O'Brien, Elizabeth

Wagnon, Erin

Redding, Mary

Hawkins, Mininia

Sickles, Bradley

### **Call to Order – Gregory Green, Assistant DFO**

Mr. Gregory Green called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

### **Introduction – Sam Shellenberger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations, DOL**

Mr. Sam Shellenberger expressed his gratitude to the members, new and established, of the ACVETEO committee, and his excitement for the topics the subcommittees have chosen to prioritize for the year. He encouraged members to showcase their management abilities in forwarding the subcommittee recommendations to the office of the Secretary and making those recommendations actionable.

### **Introduction/Meeting Logistics –Gregory Green**

Mr. Green discussed administrative logistics of the meeting for committee members, primarily highlighting that Chairman Eversole will be informing the committee of placeholder dates for future meetings and obligations of the committee.

### **Introduction/Meeting Objectives—Chairman Eric Eversole, ACVETEO**

Chairman Eric Eversole outlined the goals and objectives for the meeting, to include:

- A focus through the meeting to initiate and develop subcommittee work on respective priorities for recommendation; subcommittees will have time to break into groups in the afternoon portion of the meeting, to start to formulate their initial thoughts
- A breakdown of the schedule for future meetings: two subcommittee meetings prior to the larger ACVETEO meetings in September and October, where finalization of reports to Secretary and Congress will occur, with a goal of setting those dates by close of today's meeting
- Briefings from DOL inner agencies, in order to understand what DOL is doing so that subcommittee recommendations can be tailored informatively

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics Briefing—Andrew Blank, BLS**

Mr. Andrew Blank presented to the committee on the BLS Employment Situation of Veterans News Release, which is published annually in March.

Employment and unemployment data on veterans is obtained through the BLS Current Population Survey. Monthly, BLS sends out the voluntary survey to obtain employment and unemployment information among 60,000 eligible households. Eligibility is based on the civilian non-institutional population aged 16 and over, excluding active duty service members and persons confined in institutions such as prisons and jails. This provides a cross-tabulated measurement of the national unemployment rate. Monthly averages of veteran employment and unemployment rendered from Current Population data are combined and tabulated for inclusion in the yearly Employment Situation of Veterans News Release.

Additionally, Federal law mandates that every three years BLS collect additional data from the Veteran Supplement, which specifically collects information regarding service-connected disability, current/past membership in the Reserve or National Guard, and location of service for Gulf-War Era II veterans. The next veteran supplement will be disseminated in 2021, and

there will be newly tailored questions based on recommendations from symposium of higher research institutions.

According to data from the 2018 Veteran Supplement, veterans with a service-related disability had an unemployment rate of 5.2 %, higher than the rate for veterans with no disability at 3.5 %. About one in three veterans with a service-related disability worked in the public sector, compared with about one in five veterans with no disability. 1.7 million (or 41 %) of Gulf War-Era II veterans reported a service-related disability, and nearly half of those veterans had a disability rating of 60 % or higher. 73.5 % of Gulf War-Era II veterans with a service-related disability were in the labor force, although overall, those veterans with a service-related disability had a lower labor force participation rate than those without a service-related disability. Unemployment rates for are not drastically different for veterans with or without service-related disabilities. About 1/3 of Gulf War-Era II veterans were current or past members of the Reserve or National Guard. And veterans who were current or past members of the Reserve or National Guard had a lower unemployment rate than veterans who were never a member of the Reserve or National Guard. Labor force participation rates were not different between the two groups.

According to annual average data, the unemployment rate for Gulf War-Era II veterans declined by 0.7 percentage points to 3.8 % in 2018. The jobless rate for all veterans was little changed over the year. The unemployment rate for female veterans declined to 3 % in 2018, and the rate for male veterans was 3.5 %. Among the 326,000 unemployed veterans in 2018, 54 % were prime age workers (or those age 25-54) ; 40 % were older workers (55 years or older); and 6 % were age 18-24.

According to first-quarter data of 2019, the overall number of unemployed veterans is down from 326,000 in 2018, to 290,000.

Mr. Blank answered questions from committee members regarding survey participant pool; Census data, and research use of the Current Population Survey and Veteran Supplement; and specific trends and trending factors of the data highlights.

Chairman Eversole wrapped up in-depth level of data discussion by pointing out to the committee that BLS data is a measurement only of those people currently employed or actively looking for work, not those who have essentially 'given up' the search; and also that it does not measure the level, or amount of hours, they're working—so it could be very temporary or part-time work, or several jobs patched together to make ends meet.

Chairman Eversole left the committee, particularly for subcommittee discussion, with this question: ..."how much does it tell us about our veteran population that they have to continue working past the age of 65?"

**Military Spouse Employment Panel Discussion—Elizabeth O’Brien, Senior Director for Military Spouse Programs, Hiring Our Heroes; Erin Wagnon, Director of Government Relations for Military Family Policy and Spouse Programs, Military Officers Association of America; Mary Redding, Founder, Military Spouse JD Network**

Ms. O’Brien provided the committee with an overview of the Hiring Our Heroes organization and its military spouse programs and endeavors. Under the military spouse program, there are currently over 50 networks worldwide focusing on professional development opportunities with 33,000 members. They have launched ‘economic empowerment zones’ across the country, where they host 2-day intensive events to empower military spouses with career development.

HOH considers a military spouse to be any individual who feels that their opportunity for employment has been impacted by a service member’s commitment to the country. This encompasses gold star spouses, veteran spouses, divorced spouses, active duty spouses, National Guard and Reserve spouses. Military Spouses JD Network uses the DoD definition of ‘dependent,’ so an individual who is living the service member. MOAA typically prioritizes active duty military spouses.

Ms. O’Brien discussed the ongoing challenges related to military spouse employment, starting with the data. Military spouse population is 92 % female. Depending on the study, military spouse unemployment ranges from 16-30 %, which is considered a ‘state of depression.’ According to Ms. O’Brien, this data shows that opportunities to be addressed in terms of military spouse unemployment right now are: upskilling, reskilling, and licensure and credentialing issues (military and their families are 10 times more likely to cross state lines than their civilian counterparts). Hiring Our Heroes has piloted a program through a grant from Anne Arundel Workforce in Maryland, which matched 130 spouses with companies for an interim period of about 6 weeks, ultimately resulting in an 82 % placement rate.

Ms. Wagnon described her work at MOAA, going off the same data provided by Ms. O’Brien. Ms. Wagnon provided a personal account of her experience with the Hiring Our Heroes corporate fellowship program through Anne Arundel Workforce, as she was a participant in the program herself. Her participation in the program brought her to her current role as Director with MOAA.

Ms. O’Brien fielded questions concerning the data sourcing and computation methods used by Hiring our Heroes, and how it compares to that of the BLS. Ms. Redding pointed out that, in terms of tracking the data, ‘underemployment’ is a very difficult concept to define, for example one can be considered underemployed if they are in a nonpracticing position.

Ms. Redding described her career trajectory, as a practicing attorney and military spouse. Thirty eight states have passed some type of provision pertaining to attorney licensure and practice, for military spouses who are located in a state for active duty. Arizona has recently eliminated all occupational licensing coming into the state, so long as individuals already hold a license from another state.

In terms of recommendations the DOL should consider in helping military spouses realize and find economic opportunities, panel members stated that the number one consideration should be to create access to workforce grants at the state and local level, in order to build up opportunities for corporate fellowship programs. A second recommendation, offered by Ms. Redding, was for the committee and DOL to use the executive order as offering direct hiring authority for federal employment of military spouses, regardless of which state(s) they are licensed in.

Chairman Eversole brought up for committee discussion the impact of self-identification prehire for military spouses, and the resume gaps that population inevitably has, as preclusions for employment or even consideration for employment.

## **RECESS**

### **Military Spouse Employment Briefing—Mininia Hawkins, Department of Defense**

Ms. Hawkins provided the committee with a brief overview of what DoD is doing to tackle spouse employment and the programs that are available.

DoD is now under the Military One Source model, which provides non-medical counseling, health and wellness, and the Military Family Life Counseling Program, along with education and career focused programs, such as SECO career coaching. Aside from SECO, which is specifically tailored to military spouses, the rest of the programs offered under Military One Source are available to active duty service members and their families as well.

The Spouse Education Career Opportunities Program, or SECO, focuses on preparation for military spouses for their education and/or changing career paths. All services under the program are available to spouses virtually. They can call in to the career counseling center, for one-on-one sessions, resume reviews, from wherever in the world they are stationed at the time.

According to DoD data, there are roughly 1 million military spouses, with 50 % under the age of 30 years old and 92 % female. 89% have some college education, with 30 % having attained a bachelor's degree, and 13 % with advanced degrees. 82 % of spouses state that they want or need to work, and 24 % indicate they are currently unemployed (actively seeking employment opportunities within the last six months). Military wives earn 25 % less than their civilian counterparts. Discussion ensued among various committee members about the credibility and sourcing of the particular statistic regarding female military spouse earning potential.

The military spouse career life cycle begins with career exploration, then to education, training and licensing, then to career connections and employment readiness. At the career exploration state is where spouses can speak one-on-one with SECO career coaches. There are 13 specific career coaching packages offered to focus on different areas. These include a STEM package, a package for new military spouses, and an entrepreneurial package. For spouses at the education, training, and licensing phase, SECO provides a My Career Advancement Account

Scholarship, which is \$4,000 to certain active duty military spouses. There are also opportunities for spouses to get assistance with licensing and credentialing fees, up to as much as \$500. For spouses exploring the career connections phase, SECO offers a military spouse employment partnership where roughly 400 partners offer employment opportunities in various sectors. There is also a spouse ambassador network, which specifically targets employment for spouses in the nonprofit sector. SECO offers resume reviews and interview preparation for spouses to gain employment readiness.

Ms. Hawkins fielded questions, and Chairman Eversole led discussion, surrounding outreach at the local level on post and base for the spouses, versus virtual outreach. The importance of face-to-face outreach and contact, and how the committee can help proliferate such outreach.

#### **Dissemination and Confirmation of Receipt of Previous Meeting Minutes- Gregory Green**

All committee members said 'aye' and confirmed receipt of previous meeting minutes, as conducted by Mr. Green.

#### **Lunch Break**

#### **Office of Disability Employment Policy Briefing—Chris Button, Workforce Assistance Policy Team, ODEP; Rose Warner, ODEP**

Ms. Warner and Ms. Button provided an overview of ODEP and its initiatives to the committee.

ODEP is located within the DOL, with an office adjacent to VETS. ODEP is the only non-regulatory Federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with all levels of Government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities (service-related or otherwise). ODEP's mission is to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Ms. Warner provided two examples of ODEP resources of interest to the committee: 1) Job Accommodation Network, or JAN, a service in which employers with disabled employee(s) or a disabled employee themselves, can call to see what accommodations might work well in their workplace. It's free of charge, and virtual, with a call center and website. 2) Workforce Recruitment Program, for students or recent graduates with disabilities who are interested in obtaining an internship or job within the Federal Government. This gives Federal employees the opportunity to interview candidates for the Workforce Recruitment Program.

ODEP works closely with VHA, specifically in their Compensative Work Therapy Program. ODEP has provided a six-part webinar to train VHA's employment specialists, and also offers conferences for customized employment practices. ODEP is developing a customized "Employment Works for Veterans" booklet, providing vignettes of veterans with disabilities who've used customized employment to obtain competitive employment. ODEP is working on a partnership with NASWA and DOL VETS for upcoming/future programs. ODEP also offers a data resource called DRIVE (Data and Resources Inspire a Vision of Employment), which provides

statistics on people with disabilities at a national or state level. The website includes statistics from Medicaid, education, and workforce. There is a veterans' resource box on the website, as well.

Ms. Warner closed by reading a vignette about Alex O., a disabled veteran who successfully found integrative employment after coming out of the service.

### **DOL VETS Briefing—Bradley Sickles, DOL VETS**

Mr. Sickles discussed DOL VETS' perspective on veterans' employment/unemployment, and the initiatives they are providing to that community as well.

DOL VETS has two grant programs to serve veterans. The largest is the Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program, which is a formula grant program to states, where they are funding two positions: Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs), who work in the AJCs.

LVERs are involved in job development or business services and don't deal with clients face-to-face. DVOPs deal with clients face-to-face in terms of barriers to employment they may face. They are case managers, who are required by law to deliver individualized career services and facilitate employment. DVOPs must also, by law, serve individuals in an order of priority, beginning with special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and then other eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment (such as Vietnam-era veterans).

"Individualized career services," according to the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, refers to pre-vocational services, such as financial literacy training, leadership training, communication skills, etc., to get them employed. To be eligible for individualized services, individuals must demonstrate that they have a need and/or are hard to serve.

The first individualized career service an individual would receive would be a skills assessment. Based on that determination, the DVOP works with the individual to develop a case management plan, in arranging services and referring the individual to services based on their needs (transportation, childcare, training, etc.).

There are 2,400 AJCs (American Job Centers) nationwide. AJCs are one-stop career centers, providing all of the DOL employment programs. Roughly 4.1 million individuals came into the centers in 2017, and of that group, 279, 619 were veterans. Disabled veterans account for about 25 % of those. Nationwide, there are 1,155 DVOPs located in the AJCs dealing with disabled veterans. The average stay for a disabled veteran in individualized career services with a DVOP is 12 weeks in length.

Mr. Sickles and Ms. Adams fielded questions from the committee regarding specifics of the assessments used at AJCs; partnership with VA; specific amount of time spent with each veteran. Mr. Green noted that it would be possible to arrange for the committee to make an onsite visit to a local AJC, if there is interest in that.

### **45-MINUTE RECESS FOR SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS**

### **Subcommittee Topic Discussion and Summary—Chairman Eversole**

Chairman Eversole led the chairs of the subcommittees in brief topical reports to the committee at-large regarding their priorities and recommendations.

Mr. Lorraine, on behalf of his subcommittee, reported that their subcommittee is primarily focused on: 1) service delivery, in regard to state implementation and used of LVERs and DVOPs. Integration of DOL services from national to local level; 2) USERRA examination.

Ms. Williams, on behalf of the under served populations subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee is primarily focused on: 1) expansion of DOL services from not just military spouses, but also to older veterans, veterans with disabilities which are not necessarily service-connected, etc; 2) additional training programs for DVOPs on how to better serve under served populations (trauma-informed care, etc.); 3) enhanced training for corporate partners; 4) ways to improve services for military spouses; 5) enhanced outreach and marketing, to enhance communications with underserved communities.

Chairman Eversole brought up the question/forethought of the committee's desire to hold a public hearing to discuss USERRA at a future meeting. Mr. Green weighed in on various options based on logistics and governing rules in order to facilitate a public or semi-public discussion to deep dive the topic of USERRA.

Mr. McDermott, on behalf of the innovative training and employment subcommittee, reported that the subcommittee is primarily focused on: 1) created a list of advisers they would like to hear from, in order to gather data on areas such as Skill Bridge; apprenticeship program at DOL; FSLA; HOH; TAP; Veterans in Piping; 2) employment aspect of education, how they intersect, etc.

Chairman Eversole laid out the upcoming schedule for the committee. Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, will be the next committee meeting, where members will be provided past reports from the subcommittees to use as a reference point for their drafts. Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 will be the second committee meeting. Mr. Green advised the committee that he would be sending out the prior subcommittee reports, along with the schedule for the upcoming meetings.

### **Adjournment**

As no public comment was made, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Eversole at 3:57 p.m.