

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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

2017 Final Report

December 31, 2017

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
Washington, DC 20210

December 31, 2017

The Honorable Alexander Acosta, Secretary
U.S Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210

Secretary Acosta:

On behalf of the members of the Department of Labor Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO), it is my honor to present to you our committee's 2017 report. ACVETEO's obligation is to serve as your subject matter experts in assessing the employment and training needs of our transitioning service members, veterans, and certain eligible dependents, advising you, your subordinate agencies, and Congress on the employment situation of the veterans' community and ways to ensure your Department's programs and services are meeting the needs of today's veterans. As your agency now seeks to transition power to a new Administration, it is our goal to ensure that you, your team, and your successors have all the tools that you need to ensure that the Department and its partners can continue to deliver quality service to our veterans.

The attached report contains the committee's recommendations, informed by the expertise of a diverse ACVETEO membership; your team in Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and other Department of Labor services; government partners to include the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Small Business Administration; as well as other private and public partners with an interest in ensuring our veterans are afforded quality employment opportunities after military service.

Over the past year, our committee has sought to build on our 2016 report, making additional recommendations that focus on three areas of responsibility for the Department of Labor: barriers to employment for veterans; transition and training resources; and direct services for veterans and employers. The ACVETEO members believe that not only will our recommendations serve to ensure continued innovation in the delivery of programs and services to veterans, but we also believe that our report can help serve as a road map for the new Administration.

I want you to know that we believe in the mission of ACVETEO and we thank you and your team at VETS for not only their dedication to helping this committee execute its responsibilities, but also working proactively to implement our past recommendations to consistently improve the programs and services available to our veterans. On behalf of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to serve our veterans through ACVETEO. We look forward to your feedback on this report and continuing our work in 2018.

Sincerely,

Ryan M. Gallucci
Chair, Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach
Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

PART I

Executive Summary

The Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach (ACVETEO) was established in 2007 under the authority of Section 4110 of Title 38, U.S. Code. ACVETEO is a non-discretionary federal advisory committee and is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App.2.

ACVETEO consists of 15 members — a diverse group of veterans from each military branch, as well as the value-added experiences from civilian subject matter experts with extensive experience in employment policy, veterans' services and workforce development. The committee receives extensive expert support not only from DOL, but also from a number of additional ex-officio members from Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, Small Business Administration and Office of Personnel Management.

The 2017 report of ACVETEO provides 12 specific recommendations and supporting rationales to the Secretary of Labor and Congress to address concerns and issues relevant to federal employment and transition assistance for the military and veteran communities. To build on past iterations of ACVETEO, this year's report focused on three specific areas under the purview of the Department of Labor (DOL):

- Barriers to Employment
- Transition Assistance and Training Support
- Direct Services

This year's recommendations build on last year's report to assist DOL in further identifying persistent challenges within the veterans' community to securing meaningful post-military employment. This year's report once again focuses on improving outreach materials, the functionality of online resources, improved coordination among federal, state, and private resources, as well as exploring ways to leverage virtual employment opportunities to better serve veterans and military-connected families. DOL has proven very responsive over the past year in tackling this committee's recommendations. For continuity, we have included an update on the execution of 2016's recommendations in this report as well.

ACVETEO's responsibilities are to assess employment and training needs of veterans and their integration into the workforce; determine the extent to which the programs and activities of the DOL are meeting such needs; assist the Assistant Secretary for Veteran' Employment and Training (ASVET) in conducting outreach to employers with respect to the training and skills of veterans and the advantages afforded employers by hiring veterans; make recommendations to the Secretary of Labor, through the ASVET, with respect to outreach activities and the employment and training needs of veterans; and carry out such other activities deemed necessary to making required reports and recommendations.

ACVETEO assesses the employment and training needs of our veterans. Such needs may include transition assistance, protection of employment and reemployment rights, education, skills training, integration into the workforce, among others, and assisting the ASVET in outreach activities to employers. ACVETEO is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness with which existing DOL programs deliver required services to America's Veterans and, where deficiencies are detected, to recommend appropriate remedial action.

PART II

2016 Recommendation Review

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

1. Congress should take legislative action amending Title 38 to include paragraph (b) of Section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as it pertains to the definition of homeless veteran to include domestic violence and other life-threatening conditions.
 - a. Complete. H.R. 6416 was passed and amended the definition of homeless Veterans.
2. The Department of Labor (DOL) should expand its outreach and education of those eligible for priority services to include active duty and reserve military spouses to address the staggering disparity in unemployment rates.
 - a. On-going. Earlier this year, DOL met with the ESGR Communications Team and identified opportunities for collaborating communications messaging to the reserve/guard community. In an on-going effort to expand its outreach, DOL is currently working with TAP SCWG to develop Moments that Matter communications campaign and identify opportunities to directly engage with transitioning service members and spouses, before transition.
3. The Department should take action to expand the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program outreach/facilitation to include outreach to community-based organizations that provide the type of employment supports identified for veterans, women veterans, military spouses and caregivers, such as mental and physical health care, shelter, childcare and transportation.
 - a. On-going. DOL has incorporated JVSG program information in VETS' blog posts to ensure VETS' stakeholders better understand JVSG programs.
4. The Department should research opportunities to implement a methodology to identify and share lessons learned and effective practices between American Job Centers with consideration to women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans.
 - a. On-going. DOL is adding requirements to the FY18 solicitation language and requirements to ensure NVTAC & NVTI will collect and repurpose success stories and share via social media in coordination with DOL VETS communications team.
5. The Department should re-evaluate its definition of special veteran populations annually to ensure that the designation encompasses all appropriate veteran populations.
 - a. On-going. This recommendation has been refined in the 2017 recommendations.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE & TRAINING SUPPORT:

6. Department of Labor should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholders to participate in DOL's Employment Workshop curriculum review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2017.
 - a. On-going. DOL is in process of the curriculum review and intend to implement the revised Employment Workshop in early 2018. Nearly 50 stakeholders were invited to participate in the curriculum review resulting in meaningful input that will facilitate improvements to the existing curriculum and the learning experience of the participants.
7. Veterans service organizations (VSOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) should review the existing Career Technical Training Track (CTTT) curriculum that will be administered and taught by Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in January

2017.

- a. On-going. DOL is in process of a robust curriculum rewrite and intend to implement the revised track in early 2018. Over 30 stakeholders were invited to participate in the curriculum review resulting in meaningful input that will facilitate improvements to the existing curriculum and the learning experience of the participants.

DOL VETS is moving forward with a recommendation to change the name from CTTT to the Career Credentialing and Apprenticeship Track for future TAP Interagency Executive Council approval.

8. DOL should, in collaboration with its partner agencies makes recommendations on the functionality of a "TAP APP."
 - a. On-going. VETS, in collaboration with ETA has begun work on the development of the TAP mobile app through ETA's CareerOneStop cooperative agreement. A Statement of Work has been created and the funds obligated. The TAP mobile app will incorporate functionality of ETA's CareerOneStop app with added content and functions pertinent to transitioning service members and their families. The app will provide the option for service members and veterans to receive text notifications and reminders.

VETS will provide more detailed milestones as the development process moves forward.

9. The Department in collaboration with the Small Business Administration (SBA) should investigate ways to improve how information is provided to small businesses about federal and state funding programs to include tax incentives available for them when they hire Veterans.
 - a. On-going. SBA's Boots to Business (B2B) program serves as the Entrepreneurship Track of the Department of Defense's (DoD) Veteran Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The TAP has three tracks for military members and their families: higher education, career technical training, and entrepreneurship. As part of the TAP, the B2B curriculum is currently undergoing comprehensive review with implementation of revised curriculum expected in early 2018. The revised B2B curriculum will include information on American Job Centers. In FY 2017, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) invited SBA to provide entrepreneurship training program information to key state workforce development stakeholders during the NASWA's Veterans Affairs Committee meeting, and the Veteran Services Conference.

DIRECT SERVICES:

10. The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) should jointly explore and pursue staff skills training for the non-Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) funded workforce system staff. Training will focus on the unique recruiting, hiring, and retention issues facing the workforce system's veteran customers receiving priority of service.
 - a. On-going. DOL changed vendors in FY2017 to improve training available to JVSG staff through NVTI.

This committee was briefed by the new vendor and informed that this is likely feasible in the coming years, contingent on resources. ACVETEO believes this remains a priority and we believe VETS is on the path to execute.

11. VETS should facilitate positive outreach activities with the federal contractor community at the state and national levels. This should involve ensuring state workforce agencies are aware of and have access to lists of federal contractors with VEVRAA job listing obligations, as well as facilitating and leading DOL's and other federal agencies' in positive outreach to the federal contractor community.
 - a. On-going. This committee believes that VETS and OFCCP have not further engaged for the purposes of proactively outreaching to the federal contractor community. The Secretary should make this a priority to ensure that federal contractor have the resources to meet their veteran hiring objectives.

12. Improve veterans' employment outcomes by increasing the number of job opportunities available to veterans and eligible spouses on state job banks and USDOL's veterans.gov.
 - a. On-going. This remains an objective of VETS. While the system is nowhere near perfect, VETS should be applauded for moving deliberately to promote the state job banks and the resources included on veterans.gov.

13. Improve coordination and visibility of Department of Labor-funded direct services for veterans by consistently engaging with four key stakeholder groups to drive veterans and employers to utilize such services. These stakeholder groups include: Department of Labor internal organizations like Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Employment Training Administration (ETA); federal agency partners like the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense; state workforce agencies; and community partners like Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and Military Service Organizations (MSOs).
 - a. Complete. VETS moved deliberately to execute this recommendation in FY2017 by routinely convening stakeholder groups to share messaging and resources. There is room for improvement in this area, but it must come from community stakeholders. VETS has executed on this recommendation and should continue to push this as a priority.

PART III

Summary of 2017 Recommendations

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

1. The Department of Labor should consider the means and mechanisms through which it could provide specific and purposeful training to field personnel, positioned to support enhanced understanding of the in- and post-service experience of veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans.
2. The Department of Labor should consider the means and mechanisms through which it could provide specific and purposeful resources on the DOL website for employers to support understanding of the post-service experience of women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans.
3. In 2016, ACVETEO recommended that the department research opportunities to identify and share lessons learned and effective practices between centers. DOL VETS should implement its strategy to share lessons learned and effective practices among American Job Centers.
4. VETS should undertake a thorough but expedient review of the current list and definitions of “Significant Barriers to Employment” (SBEs) governing the JVSG program to consider expanding SBEs and/or having additional target populations as defined by the Secretary.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE & TRAINING SUPPORT:

5. Department of Labor should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholders to participate in DOL’s Employment Workshop and Career Credentialing and Apprenticeship Track (CCAT) technical review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2018.
6. Department of Labor should increase outreach efforts to engage businesses and stakeholders on advancing apprenticeship opportunities for Veterans.
7. Department of Labor should increase outreach and services for military spouses.
8. As the single federal portal for Veteran employment, Department of Labor should continue to refine and improve VETERANS.GOV and should work with Veterans Affairs to resolve duplicative employment information on Vets.gov.

DIRECT SERVICES:

9. VETS should work with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Association of State Approving Agencies to improve the benefit-delivery process for veterans receiving GI bill benefits to participate in a registered apprenticeship program. The current method is cumbersome and costly to veterans utilizing GI benefits as supplemental income.
10. DOL should encourage HIRE Vets Medallion Program participants to demonstrate interaction with the federal workforce system, such as listing job opportunities in the National Labor Exchange.
11. DOL should strategically leverage internal and external federal resources to properly equip transitioning service members, veterans, and eligible dependents with the all of the information they need to succeed in the civilian marketplace. This means that business lines like OFCCP, ETA, ODEP and others require sufficient funding to sustain their shared mission to promote veteran success in the workforce.
12. VETS and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) should work toward promoting virtual job opportunities for military spouses to promote quality career opportunities and growth.

PART IV
**Recommendations and Rationales by Specific Areas: Barriers to
Employment, Transition Assistance & Training Support, and Direct
Services**

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

As both demonstrated in practice and informed by research, there is a clear danger with regard to failing to acknowledge inherent differences between the service-connected (and non-service-connected) experiences represented by different cohorts of the veterans' community; that is, specifically how those experiences might differently impact the process of transitioning from military to civilian life, and subsequent post-service employment. Put differently, it is the opinion of the committee that broad and sweeping generalizations with regard to the economic and employment concerns of the population – and strategies to impact those concerns – are inappropriate and limiting. To that end, the committee makes the following recommendations related to advancing insight – and ultimately advancing impactful service-delivery – in support of the employment situation veterans with disabilities, women veterans, Native American veterans and other veterans, reservists and military spouses with barriers to employment:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The Department of Labor should consider the means and mechanisms through which it could provide specific and purposeful training to field personnel, positioned to support enhanced understanding of the in- and post-service experience of veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans. The intent of such training is to better position field personnel – particularly those that interface with local and regional employers – to:

- a) Effectively communicate the business case supporting employment opportunities for veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans, and
- b) Educate the employer community in a way that blunts the myths and stereotypes often associated with these populations of the veterans' community.

Recommendation Rationale:

The Department of Labor has made great strides in providing specific and purposeful training to field personnel to support enhanced understanding of the in- and post-service experience of women veteran, the department is urged to expand its training program to support enhanced understanding of the in- and post-service experience of veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Department of Labor should consider the means and mechanisms through which it could provide specific and purposeful resources on the DOL website for employers to support understanding of the post-service experience of women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans. The intent of such training is to better position employers to:

- a) Effectively communicate the business case for hiring women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans, and

- b) Educate the employer community in a way that highlights the strengths and blunts the myths and stereotypes often associated with these populations of the veterans' community.

Recommendation Rationale:

It has been identified by the committee that employers often lack understanding of the assets that women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans bring to the workplace. Furthermore, employers would benefit from the understanding of the in- and post-service experience of women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans. Developing and marketing specific and purposeful resources on the DOL website for an employer education series to employ women veterans, veterans with disabilities and Native American veterans would bring an enhanced understanding of the benefits these populations provide employers and the workforce.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

In 2016, it was recommended that the department research opportunities and capitalize on current initiatives to implement a methodology to identify and share lessons learned and effective practices between centers. It is recommended that DOL VETS implement its strategy to share lessons learned and effective practices among American Job Centers.

Recommendation Rationale:

The department has completed its research to implement a methodology to identify and share best practices and lessons learned between centers. The department is urged to implement its methodology. By sharing effective practices, American Job Centers can learn what is working in other agencies and assess if the identified practice can be implemented in their own agency, saving time and resources trying to develop strategies that may already exist. Effective practices can improve the quality of services offered to veterans based on gender, veterans who are disabled, military spouses and caregivers, increase the productivity and efficiencies of agencies, and identify and replace poor practices with proven strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

VETS should undertake a thorough but expedient review of the current list and definitions of "Significant Barriers to Employment" (SBEs) governing the JVSG program to consider expanding SBEs and/or having additional target populations as defined by the Secretary. The Department should also establish a standardized review process for SBEs and additional target populations.

Recommendation Rationale:

While the falling unemployment rate for veterans has been a welcome development, there is still a substantial number of veterans being served within the broader one-stop system that could certainly use the assistance of specialized JVSG services, but are currently ineligible due to SBE restrictions. This situation may impact veterans with a non-service connected disability, veterans who never received a VA disability rating, older veterans, veterans impacted by natural disasters, or other state-based economic circumstances, such as the decline of certain local industries. If broader one-stop systems are scaled back due to reduced funding, VETS should thoroughly review existing limitations on DVOP customer eligibility to meet the needs of the eligible veterans' community.

1. The review of current SBEs and their definitions should aim to accommodate veterans with disabilities not incurred in military service.
2. The Secretary, in 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a)(1)(C), is given the ability to identify additional groups of veterans who are entitled to receive intensive services from DVOP staff. Alternatively, we recommend, the Secretary under this clause, conduct a study to determine if veterans with disabilities not incurred in military service are better served under vocational rehabilitation or the American Jobs Center (AJC). If the study indicates that veterans with disabilities not incurred in military service are better served as a special population in the AJCs, the Secretary should designate veterans with disabilities not incurred in a military service as entitled to receive intensive services. Further, we recommend that under this section, the Secretary research the criterion required in which states could designate state-defined veteran populations as entitled to receive intensive services.
3. Finally, the Secretary should consider establishing a standard process and methodology to regularly review current and future SBEs, as well as, additional groups of veterans - as designated under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a)(1)(C), to ensure veterans receive the appropriate level and type of service, reflective of economic conditions and trends.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE & TRAINING SUPPORT:

Nearly 184,000 transitioning Service members participated in the Department of Labor's Employment Workshop at 206 worldwide installations last year. Additionally, DOL assumed responsibility for instructing and facilitating the Career Technical Training Track in April 2017. ACVETEO continues to emphasize that effective and relevant curriculum is critical to the participant's experience to facilitate a successful transition. ACVETEO is appreciative of DOL VETS efforts the last two years in ensuring VSOs and other stakeholders' participation the curriculum review process. It remains essential that stakeholders' participation be continued in DOL's Employment Workshop as well as other Transition GPS modules and optional curriculum training tracks to include the Career Technical Training Track.

Several studies indicate that military spouses have significantly higher unemployment rates and greater challenges in establishing a meaningful career. ACVETEO believes there are potential opportunities to provide increased assistance and training to military spouses.

ACVETEO believes that VETERANS.GOV is an effective virtual "first stop" in the employment search process for Veterans, transitioning service members and their spouses --and for employers in the hiring process. It is expected that continual improvements will be made to VETERANS.GOV to keep pace with changing resources. ACVETEO also continues to receive feedback from Veteran Service Organizations and other stakeholders that VETERANS.GOV and Vets.gov (including Veterans Affairs' Veterans Employment Center) can be confusing to Veterans as there is duplicative employment information on each of the sites.

ACVETEO has made the following recommendations and supporting rationales to improve transition resources, services, and opportunities for Veterans and military spouses to facilitate meaningful employment and careers.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Department of Labor should continue to ensure Veteran Service Organizations, employers, and other stakeholders to participate in DOL's Employment Workshop and Career Credentialing and Apprenticeship

Track (CCAT) technical review scheduled for Fiscal Year 2018.

Recommendation Rationale:

The biennial curriculum review cycle at DOL VETS consist of the robust curriculum review one year followed by a technical review the next year. Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) stakeholders, and employers participated in the FY16 and FY17 curriculum review of the DOL Employment Workshop as well as the FY17 curriculum rewrite of the CCAT (formerly Career Technical Training Track). Their significant contributions facilitated a much-improved Employment Workshop and CCAT. In order to keep pace with the changing dynamics of the job seeker, employment and licensing/credentialing and apprenticeship space, VSOs, Employers and other stakeholders should continue to participate in the next technical review of the curriculum in FY2018.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Department of Labor should increase outreach efforts to engage businesses and stakeholders on advancing apprenticeship opportunities for Veterans.

Recommendation Rationale:

Employers want to hire Veterans but often times a Veteran does not have an industry recognized credential required by the employer. Effectively addressing this “skill gap” through training and education will lead to better employment outcomes for transitioning Service members, Veterans and their spouses.

The Presidential Executive Order Expanding Apprenticeships in America was signed June 15, 2017.

Apprenticeships are a proven strategy for Veterans to advance into productive careers. Approximately 37,000 Veterans are actively participating in Registered Apprenticeships, in 2014 and 2,200 veteran apprentices completed their apprenticeship in the 25 states managed by DOL. The employment outcomes for Apprenticeship programs are impressive. In fact, according to DOL data, 91 percent of apprentices are employed after completing their programs, with an average starting wage above ~\$60,000. Apprenticeships have also been shown to increase a worker’s lifetime compensation by over \$300,000

Eligible Post 9-11 Veterans can learn a trade through apprenticeships and use their GI Bill benefits to receive a tax-free monthly stipend paid by Veteran Affairs. This stipend gradually decreases as Veterans’ wages regularly increase throughout the Apprenticeship period and ends once the veteran attains journeyman status and pay. Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients can also receive a books and supplies stipend during their Apprenticeship. This is a vital way to help Veterans meet their expenses while in a training program.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Department of Labor should increase outreach and services for military spouses.

Recommendation Rationale:

According to an Institute for Veterans and Military Families study/briefing “THE FORCE BEHIND THE FORCE: Training, Leveraging, and Communicating about Military Spouses as Employees,” dated December 2016, 23 percent of military spouses are unemployed, 66 percent report they are working or looking for work, and just 3 percent are not in the labor force because they do not want to work. Additionally, Hiring Our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s study “Military Spouses in the

Workplace Understanding the Impacts of Spouse Unemployment on Military Recruitment, Retention and Readiness” dated June 2017, stated that overall military spouse unemployment is 16 percent in 2017- “four times higher than the current rate for adult working women (4.0 percent in May 2017) and three times higher than the unemployment rate for women between the ages of 20 and 25.” This study’s key finding included:

- Unemployment continues to be a significant challenge for most military spouses. Many are in part-time or seasonal positions when they would prefer full-time or permanent work.
- Military spouses with degrees face the greatest challenges in nearly every measurable employment category. They face the highest rates of unemployment and the most difficulty finding meaningful work.
- Moves between duty stations play havoc on careers. Not only do most military spouses have to quit jobs because of a move, they face long periods of unemployment after the move.
- Like most American families, military families want and need two incomes—something that is much harder to achieve for military families.
- The lack of employment opportunities creates stress and influences a family’s decision to stay or leave the military—factors that ultimately hurt military readiness, retention and recruiting.”

RECOMMENDATION 8:

As the single federal portal for Veteran employment, Department of Labor should continue to refine and improve VETERANS.GOV and should work with Veterans Affairs to resolve duplicative employment information on Vets.gov.

Recommendation Rationale:

DOL established VETERANS.GOV as a unified Federal web-based employment portal, for use by Veterans, containing information regarding all Federal programs and activities concerning employment, unemployment, and training to the extent the programs and activities affect Veterans. VETERANS.GOV is designed to be the virtual “first stop” in the employment search process for Veterans, transitioning service members and their spouses --and for employers in the hiring process. Through VETERANS.GOV, employers receive personalized assistance in finding and employing Veterans.

Veteran Service Organizations and other stakeholders have stated that two websites, VETERANS.GOV and Vets.gov can be confusing to veterans. Additionally, the Veterans Affairs’ Veteran Employment Center is still advertised as “a government wide product that brings together a reputable cadre of employers with real job opportunities, and provides transitioning Service members, Reserve Component Service members, Veterans and their families with the tools to translate military skills into plain language and build a profile that can be shared – in real time – with employers who have made a public commitment to hire Veterans.” The VEC’s shared profile capability no longer exists and the other functions already exist in VETERANS.GOV.

DIRECT SERVICES

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provides a variety of direct services to veteran job-seekers and employers who seek to recruit, hire, and retain veterans.

While today veteran unemployment rates are at a historic low, DOL must work closely with partner federal agencies (internal and external to DOL), as well as, state workforce agencies, and veterans organizations, to ensure veterans and eligible spouses continue to have access to credible employment opportunities and effective services, and employers can easily navigate programs and services. The following recommendations from ACVETEO are intended to help DOL continue fostering coordination to best serve the needs of the veteran community.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

VETS should work with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Association of State Approving Agencies to improve the benefit-delivery process for veterans receiving GI Bill benefits to participate in a registered apprenticeship program. The current method is cumbersome and costly to veterans utilizing GI benefits as supplemental income.

Recommendation Rationale:

Veterans accepted into “earn-while-you-learn” positions in some registered apprenticeships have the ability to receive GI Bill benefits in the form of a supplemental income. This benefit payment is sent from VA directly to the veteran and is considered supplemental income to the apprentice’s paycheck from the employer. However, the processes for program approval, collection for organizing the veteran’s information, and subsequent benefit payment are managed across two federal agencies (VA and DOL) and the State Approving Agency responsible for evaluating local veterans’ education programs. This archaic process can cause a backlog of up to six months before the veteran will receive the first supplemental payment. This can cause unforeseen financial hardships for those who choose to participate in these programs that range from paying bills to simply putting gas in the vehicle and groceries on the table. The American economy is starving for new workers in the skilled trades, and veterans who complete registered apprenticeships have the ability to fill this critical gap. However, proper administration of earned federal benefit programs are essential to their success in these industries.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

DOL should encourage HIRE Vets Medallion Program participants to demonstrate interaction with the department-funded federal workforce system, such as listing job opportunities in the National Labor Exchange.

Recommendation Rationale:

Regulations on the HIRE Vets Medallion Program do not tie the awarding a recognition to employers that have excelled in recruiting, hiring and retaining veterans to working with the workforce development system that the department itself funds. Under the act, DOL has the opportunity to create additional criteria for eligibility. Though not included in current regulations, DOL should work to recognize employers that have utilized the multitude of business services offered to them in recruiting, hiring and retaining veterans and eligible spouses offered through the workforce development system.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

DOL should strategically leverage internal and external federal resources to properly equip transitioning service members, veterans, and eligible dependents with the all of the information they need to succeed in the civilian marketplace. This means that business lines like OFCCP, ETA, ODEP and others require sufficient funding to sustain their shared mission to promote veteran success in the workforce.

Recommendation Rationale:

Congress is currently looking at ways to reduce federal spending. However, at a time when veteran employment remains a national imperative, this committee believes that Congress and the Trump

Administration should continue to invest in workforce development tools to promote quality veteran employment opportunities.

Congress has recognized the importance of the programs and services offered to veterans through VETS, but this committee also recognizes these services are not the only programs that ensure veterans have access to quality employment opportunities. If services through other DOL business lines like ETA (where all employment programs, and especially Wagner-Peyser/Employment Services, offer “priority of service” to thousands veterans not eligible for JVSG services), OFCCP, and ODEP erode, more responsibility will fall to VETS to ensure certain employer obligations are met and that direct services are delivered to veterans.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

VETS and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) should work toward promoting virtual job opportunities for military spouses to promote quality career opportunities and growth.

Recommendation Rationale:

As the American workforce changes, more major employers are deploying highly-skilled employment opportunities via telework and remote access, commonly referred to as “virtual jobs.” Most federal agencies offer career-track and management employees the opportunity to advance their careers without being tethered to a physical office space.

The nature of military life often means that military spouses must forego career-track professional employment opportunities due to frequent moves, often to locations far away from major employment hubs. However, virtual jobs are already demonstrating the ability to change this paradigm.

Both the federal and private sector workforce have demonstrated increased productivity and financial benefits to offering virtual work arrangements. VETS should work with employers to promote these quality career opportunities to military spouses.

PART V
Appendix

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Appointed members:

J. Michael Haynie, Ph.D.
Barnes Professor of Entrepreneurship, Whitman School of Management Syracuse University
Recognized Authority (Business)

Lois A. Bethards
Executive Director, American Indian Center of Arkansas
Recognized Authority (Business)

Jon Jukuri
National Conference of State Legislatures
Recognized Authority (Business)

Tracy St. Benoit
Researcher and High Risk Ethnographer, University of Florida
Recognized Authority (Rehabilitation)

Joylin Kirk
Senior Director of Mission Services, Goodwill Industries International
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Nichole Coleman
Executive Director, County Veterans Service Officer
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Richard M. Jones
Member, American Legion, Senior Vice President, CBS Corporation
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Ryan Gallucci (Chair)
Deputy Director of Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Veteran Service Organization Representative

Henry G. Jackson
President & CEO, Society for Human Resource Management Representative (Mandated Organization)

M. Eric Eversole
Vice President and Executive Director, Hiring Our Heroes Program
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Representative (Mandated Organization)

Pam Gerassimides
NLX Director & Assistant Executive Director
National Association of State Workforce Agencies Representative (Mandated Organization)

Stephen Parker
Legislative Director, Education and Workforce
National Governors Association Representative (Mandated Organization)

Darrell L. Roberts
Executive Director, Helmets to Hardhats
Labor Union or Organization Representative (Mandated Organization)

Ross Brown
JPMorgan Chase
Business Roundtable Representative (Mandated Organization)

Ex-officio, Nonvoting Members

- Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- Secretary of Defense
- Director, Office of Personnel Management
- Assistant Secretary of Labor (VETS)
- Assistant Secretary of Labor (ETA)
- Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration