

## NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

### TOPIC 1: ECONOMY

Hiring and job openings in the private sector fell in August in a sign the US labor market was cooling off as an economic recovery lost some of its earlier momenta, a government survey showed.

Businesses, governments, and other organizations hired 5.9 million people in August, according to a Labor Department survey of the labor market that's released with a one-month delay.

The number of people hired was unchanged from July, but the total was inflated by the addition of nearly 250,000 temporary workers hired by the US Census for its once-in-a-decade national survey. Hiring in the private sector declined.

Job openings also slipped to 6.49 million from 6.7 million. The number of jobs available was running around 7 million a month before the coronavirus struck in March.



The number of separations — layoffs, firings, people quitting — fell to 4.59 million in August from 4.99 million in July. At the peak of the Pandemic in March and April, the US lost more than 24 million jobs. So far it's only recovered about half of them back.

Hiring increased the most in August in government and manufacturing (+41,000). Yet hotels, restaurants and health-care providers — industries hard hit by the Pandemic — hired far fewer people in August than they did in July.

Job openings declined in most industries across the country. The share of people who left jobs on their own, known as the quits rate, fell to 2.2% from 2.4% among private-sector employees. It's a full percentage point lower compared to a year ago; fewer people are willing quit a secure job during a recession.

Millions of people returned to their jobs after the economy reopened in May, but millions more are still without work and have little prospect of finding any. Many businesses in travel, tourism, retail and other service-oriented industries have suffered a massive loss of customers who are unlikely to return until the Pandemic fades or a treatment is found. As a result, the pace of hiring has slowed and further gains in employment are likely to be harder to come by.

What could make the situation worse is if a second wave of layoffs strikes the economy. Some industries badly damaged by the coronavirus, such as airlines and hotels, have said they plan to turn temporary furloughs into permanent job losses unless they get more government aid.

“After a few months of being surprisingly strong, job openings have slowed down. This is a sign that while labor demand held up more than we may have expected early in the recovery, that pace

is not guaranteed to continue,” said Nick Bunker, director of research at Indeed Hiring Lab. “If that’s the case, the prospects for unemployed workers permanently separated from their job finding a new one may dim,” he added.

It is imperative that we educated private sector employers on the value of hiring a veteran will bring to their companies. Most private sector companies either do not know or don’t understand the value veterans bring to the table. The American Legion Supports legislation, or administrative actions would provide training to private sector employers and human resource managers to hire veterans.

***Resolution No. 16: Develop Training for Employers who Utilize Veterans' Preference in their Hiring Practices***

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

HOUSEHOLD				DATA		
Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted						
[Numbers in thousands]						
Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Sep 2019	Sep 2020	Sep 2019	Sep 2020	Sep 2019	Sep 2020
Unemployed	282	568	238	496	45	72
Unemployment rate	3.1	6.4	2.9	6.4	4.0	6.5

*The national unemployment rate is 7.9 percent (Sept 2020). Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 7.5 percent.<sup>i</sup> Currently, the unemployment rate for Gulf War II women veterans is 5.7 percent (Down from 6.9 percent in September).*

In September 2020, the veteran unemployment rate is 6.4%, down from 6.6% last month and 7.9% two months ago. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was 7.9% in September and 8.4% in August

## TOPIC 2: CONFERENCE CALLS

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division spoke with Jim Howell, Vice President of Auto Personnel. Their goal is to increase their veteran employees across the nation.

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division participated in a virtual VSO/MSO Roundtable with Cerner Government Services Executive team and Service Organization partners on Cerner's progress with MHS Genesis and VA EHRM.

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division participated in a webinar: Closing the Skills Gap: Age-Inclusive Learning Strategies hosted by AARP. The Pandemic changed the way we work with social distancing policies. The speakers discussed the benefits of an age-inclusive learning business environment and discussed new and existing resources that help older workers develop upskilling & reskilling strategies.

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conference call with the Veterans Employment Task Force along with other workgroup leaders for the GW Bush National Education Task Force Discussion of National Initiatives to increase Veterans employment, including “The Future of Work,” Credentialing and assessment of Veteran Employment Initiatives. GWBush Institute will review what the task force is doing and seek opportunities to collaborate and share data and ideas.

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division research and review of educational oversight and wording in the new bill, to HR 4625, Protect the GI Bill Act now at VA for Technical recommendations.

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division held a meeting with EANGUS to discuss their plans to break off the Veterans Education Project (VEP) into an independent non-profit. Currently, VEP serves as EANGUS's education advocacy arm. Due to organizational changes, VEP will be splitting off, and EANGUS will likely be discontinuing its education advocacy.

***On Monday, October 5,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division held a meeting with veterans interested in building a new non-profit organization: the Special Operations Association of America (SOAA), to be structured with similar laws of governance as the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and Reserve Organization of America (ROA). The meeting discussed the outstanding education and credentialing challenges and opportunities faced by the particular warfare community.

***On Tuesday, October 6,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a NASAA Legislative Committee meeting and discussed areas to coordinate Hill's efforts. Completed review of the Language of HR 4625.

***On Tuesday, October 6,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the GW Bush National Education Task Force Work Group Leaders meeting on Education Policy and the Future of Work. We discussed a path forward because of the Pandemic. The national convening will be virtual in December, and then we will meet in Texas in February for the actual National meeting. The goal is to develop policy goals for the next Administration.

***On Tuesday, October 6,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with future NC state leaders to serve veterans. Also, Conversation with the RBS program manager on metrics for oversight of educational institutions, how to report on pilot program success, and how to engage at-risk institutions, particularly during the Pandemic.

***On Wednesday, October 7,*** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a teleconferenced with o VSOs regarding the retention of veteran employees within the federal agencies. Highlighting concerns and lack of actions on recommendations from a GAO report released earlier this year (GAO 20-592.)

***On Wednesday, October 7***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a discussion with SAA directors about the challenges of the new VA policy on 85/15 and its impact on higher education and student veterans. Discussions with State VA leaders on oversight and 85/15 requirements. Concern over the new requirements, end of waivers for 85/15 during the Pandemic, and impossibility of meeting reporting requirements.

***On Wednesday, October 7***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a national webinar on the impact of COVID on higher education leadership and institutions. The impact on working mothers, minorities, and those in the lower socio-economic spectrum is more severe. We discuss how the view of online learning will change and discuss how best to navigate the crisis in the short term.

***On Wednesday, October 7***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with the new chair and vice-chair of the NASAA Legislative Committee and what challenges we face in higher education due to COVID, also how we can coordinate our efforts on the Hill.

***On Wednesday, October 7***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with RBS Program Coordinator on challenges working with VA on the RBS project. Our data asks are of them—attended DUS Paul Lawrences VA Town Hall for NC. Mostly health issues were discussed, but VA is attempting to continue outreach and service to Veterans during COVID.

***On Thursday, October 8***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with the Cerner Government Affairs team following up from last week's hearing on the EHR modernization status. VA has recently come under scrutiny for improperly issuing task orders to Cerner for IT projects that are unrelated to EHR and possibly violate the Competition in Contracting Act.

***On Thursday, October 8***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with staff Swords to Plowshares for a quarterly update on programmatic progress of the organization's homeless veterans' transition services during the Pandemic.

***On Thursday, October 8***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with West Region SAAs about the issues impacting educational institutions' oversight. Challenges include COVID impact on students and personnel and new 85/15 guidance, which is impossible to meet deadlines and reporting requirements. Also, problems with Compliance Survey requirements require copies of all docs from the visits, including student files and PII exposure. Some schools will withdraw from the GI Bill program due to impossible VA requirements.

***On Thursday, October 8***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had conversations with SVAC staff on these new developments and HR 4625 changes suggested by some VSOs and VA. We will meet with VES and SVA to discuss these.

***On Thursday, October 8***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division held a conference call with Lumina Foundation to discuss the Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative's progress. Lumina expressed concern about a lack of a present audience profile for the research report VE&E is working on. It was agreed that contracting out a marketing firm would be the quickest route towards development.

***On Friday, October 9***, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had meetings with VES leadership on education oversight within HR 4625 and addressing needed SAA authority.

Also, Education Counsel, Lumina, and NASAA Weekly Meeting on RBS Advisory Council meeting and needed VA assistance with data.

**On Friday, October 9,** the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with NAVPA and SVA leadership on new VA requirements for 85/15 reporting, and how we can push back on these requirements to safeguard veterans' access to quality may be lost due to unnecessary withdrawal of programs.

### TOPIC 3: TRACKING LEGISLATION

**GI Bill Repair Act of 2020:** To extend to black veterans of World War II, their surviving spouses, and direct descendants eligibility for specific housing and educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution: None on file](#)

**Status: Currently on hold, has not been introduced**

**Homeless Veteran Coronavirus Response Act:** The bill allows VA to use existing funds for a broader range of services; authorizes the Department to collaborate with outside organizations to facilitate shelters on its properties; loosens restrictions on Grant and Per Diem (GPD) payments, and requires VA to ensure veterans participating in VA homeless programs have access to VA telehealth services.

(Tracked by Teresa Lewis)

[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)

**HR 8426: Protecting Apprenticeship Training for Veterans Act:** Currently, veterans must meet a minimum number of apprenticeship hours to receive their Housing Allowance. Due to pandemic work shortages, veterans in those programs now face a reduction or suspension in their stipend. This would allow veteran apprentices who were laid off to roll over excess hours from a previous month to meet the hourly requirement.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution: Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

**Status: Letter of support drafted**

**HR 6800, the Heroes Act:** Allows VA to provide transport and purchase food, shelter, phones, clothing, blankets and toiletry items for homeless veterans; Authorizes VA to set up temporary encampments on the grounds of VA Medical Centers to allow homeless veterans to shelter on VA parking lots temporarily; Allows VA to provide reimbursements to social service providers receiving grants for the costs of services for minor children.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

[Resolution No. 324: Support Funding for Homeless Veterans](#)

**HR 7445:** To expand eligibility for home loans from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces.

[Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program](#)

**Status: This bill was submitted for the July 23, 2020 testimony.**

**HR 1615:** The American Legion supports legislation that would streamline and improve the verification process for veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

[Resolution No. 155: Support Verification Improvements for Veterans' Business](#)

**Status:** Passed at the 2016 National Convention.

**HR 2224:** To direct the Secretary of Labor to prioritize services to homeless veterans with dependent children in carrying out homeless veterans' reintegration programs and for other purposes.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus/John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)

**HR 1196, Jobs for Veterans Act of 2019:** This bill allows an increased work opportunity tax credit for employers who hire veterans who have been certified as discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and who begin working for the employer after December 31, 2019, and before January 1, 2024. This increased credit is in addition to any work opportunity tax credit allowed to a veteran with a service-connected disability.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus/John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

**HR 7010, Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020:** This bill significantly changes the terms of the PPP loans to be more advantageous to small businesses. Including more flexibility in applying the loan to other expenses besides payroll and benefits and extending the time frame for expending the loan.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**HR 4625:** To require education programs to be approved by the VA to abide by the Principles of Excellence to include a ban on deceptive or misleading recruiting, clear information about total costs and program requirements, accommodation for deployments, ensuring a point of contact for veterans, and not being under a punitive action by an accreditor.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

**HR 6957:** To direct the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to treat a period of full-time National Guard duty, performed in response to the national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, by the President concerning COVID-19, as not shorter than 90 days.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

Currently studying for appropriate resolution.

**HR 4941: Veteran Employment Transition Act” or the “VET Act”** was sponsored by Representative Andy Kim. The last action on the bill was in the House on 12/02/2019; it was referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The bill's goal is to improve the Transition Assistance Program. The bill would allow certain veterans' service organizations to contact veterans regarding benefits and to better inform veterans of employment opportunities. The Service groups would inform veterans of the benefits and employment opportunities with the Federal, State, and local governments. The groups inform veterans of events for in the area.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 70: Improve Transition Assistance Program](#)

**Status:** A letter of Support was sent

**HR 7003:** is a bill sponsored by Rep. Takano, Mark D-CA-41 and was introduced 05/22/2020. The bill would authorize a pilot program in the Department of Defense to enhance efforts to provide job placement assistance and related employment services directly to members of the National Guard, Reserves, and veterans of the Armed Forces. The last action on the bill was 05/22/2020 and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(Tracked by Raymond Lorminey/Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 81: Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops for National Guard and Reserve Members](#)

**HR 7111: Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2020:** Require the Secretary of VA to carry out a rapid retraining program that provides eligible veterans up to 12 months of retraining assistance for in-demand occupations. These 12 months of benefits would be equivalent to payments made to students and schools through the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 316: Support Employment of Veterans in the Public and Private Workforce](#)

**Status:** This bill was submitted for the July 23, 2020 testimony.

**HR 4920 Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020:** is a bill that would allow AbilityOne companies to keep their preferential treatment at the Department of Veteran Affairs after 2016 with some compromises. The Senate initially sent it back to the House after it was passed for changes. Those changes have been reconciled and the bill cleared its last hurdle before it is sent to the White House.

**S. 2594:** To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans' Preference for federal hiring.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)

[Resolution No. 317: Enforcing Veterans' Preference Hiring Practices in Federal Civil Service](#)

**S. 3745, Coronavirus Emergency Borrower Defense (E-BD) Act:** to require the Department of Education to grant full student loan discharges to three specific emergency categories of defrauded borrowers—specifically borrowers covered by:

- (1) Department of Education findings against Corinthian.
- (2) Department of Education findings against ITT Tech; and
- (3) State attorneys general group discharge applications made before the date of enactment.

(Tracked by John Kamin)

[Resolution No. 82: Preserve Veteran and Servicemember Rights to Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense Protections](#)

**Draft Bill:** JSF - To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the scope of procedural rights of members of the uniformed services concerning their employment and reemployment rights, and for other purposes.

(Tracked by Davy Leghorn)

**Status:** We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.

**Draft Bill:** USERRA Protections for State Active Duty - To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend particular employment and reemployment rights to members of the National Guard who perform State active duty. Submitted written testimony to the Legislative Division.

(Tracked by Ariel De Jesus)



**Resolution No. 315: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment**

**Status:** We submitted written testimony for the July 23, 2020 hearing.

**Draft Bill:** Veterans Educational Assistance Transparency and Accountability Improvement Act, improve the GI. Bill Comparison Tool and ensures veterans, servicemembers, and their families are better informed when choosing what educational institution is best for them.

**Resolution No. 327: Support Further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices**

**Status:** A letter of Support was sent

## TOPIC 4: EMPLOYMENT

### 1. Please check out the following press releases:

- a. [US Department of Labor Announces Eightfold.ai Selected As Grand Prize Recipient of Veteran Employment Challenge.](#) The US Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) has selected Eightfold.ai, a Mountain View, California-based software solution provider, as the grand prize recipient of its competition to build an application to better match transitioning military service members' skills with employers' needs. VETS established the Veterans Employment Challenge in December 2019, an open competition that welcomed more than 50 organizations to develop a better job-matching platform for transitioning service members. In June 2020, VETS, with support from the US Department of Defense and US Department of Veterans Affairs, invited three finalists, Eightfold.ai, Square Peg Hires and LinkedIn, to present their software solutions to transitioning service members from various military installations through virtual Transition Assistance Program (TAP) courses. In July, based on user-experience evaluations, Eightfold.ai was selected as the finalist and further testing and evaluations conducted in August confirmed the product's effectiveness with transitioning service members, transition assistance instructors, and employers. Note: This solution is not to replace DoD MILGEARS or other applications/tools. This Challenge took place to encourage private sector innovation and competition to develop another job matching tool(s) for TSMs, veterans and military spouses.
- b. [Second Lady Karen Pence and US Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia Announce Program to Assist Military Spouses.](#) On Wednesday, ASVET John Lowry led a delegation that included the Second Lady of the United States Karen Pence and US Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia to announce and view the launch of a new Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshop for military spouses at NAS Jacksonville. The Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses (TEAMS) effort will assist military spouses in their career endeavors with training on employment essentials, tailored to their unique circumstances. VETS is developing the workshop's four pilot TEAMS courses to address the employment-related challenges faced by military spouses, and they will be presented in both virtual and in-person classroom settings. The four initial offerings include:
  - “Your Next Move”
  - “Career Credentials: How Important Are They?”
  - “Mastering Resume Essentials” and
  - “Marketing Me: Job Search Tactics & Networking”

The four courses will also be piloted in classrooms at Ft. Gordon and Ft. Hood in October 2020, followed by 20 virtual presentations from Oct. 26, 2020, through Oct. 30, 2020. After that, we expect to deliver the curriculum to military spouses who are transitioning from service with



their service member. In addition, we expect to make the curriculum available to our partners in DoD for use by the services in other settings that are convenient for military spouses.

- c. [US Department of Labor and US Department of Veteran Affairs Sign Memorandum of Agreement to Enhance Services to Veterans](#) Last week VETS and VR&E leaders hosted a virtual ceremony to commemorate the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the two agencies. Twenty-five years into the partnership, the VETS-VR&E Joint Workgroup continue to develop new ways to improve how we serve disabled veterans. In 2020, the two agencies are collaborating to increase the number of VR&E participants who enroll in apprenticeships. With an average starting annual salary of \$70,000 and a post apprenticeship retention rate over 90 percent, this collaboration will benefit veterans and their employers.
- d. [US Department of Labor Announces Availability of \\$150 Million To Invest in Workforce Training for Key US Employment Sectors](#) The three industry focuses of the grant program are: transportation, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing. The goal is to streamline funding and resources to encourage a more integrated workforce system that will encourage applicants to provide an innovative mix of training strategies, leveraging innovative modes of training delivery, including online, distance and other technology-enabled learning. Among the individuals eligible to receive training, those of interest include unemployed and underemployed individuals seeking full-time employment, and incumbent workers needing to update or upskill to retain employment or advance into middle- to high-skilled positions. *Veterans, military spouses and transitioning service members will receive Priority of Service.* See Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=329075>.

## 2. Transition Assistance Program:

- a. The self-paced online versions of the DOL 2-day workshops (Employment Workshop and the Career and Credential Exploration Workshop) for Transitioning Servicemembers (TSM) are now live on DoD's LMS. You can find them at <https://www.tapevents.org/courses> under "All Courses" or "Transition Tracks" selections.
- b. VETS TAP initiatives update- see slide below. The Employment Navigator Pilot will begin at the 13 installations listed below.



**Prepare: Transition Assistance Program Initiatives**

**Employment Navigator Pilot:**

- One-on-One personalized assistance to TSMs on select installations (13)
- Launch date: April 1, 2021

**Apprenticeship Pilot (Underway):**

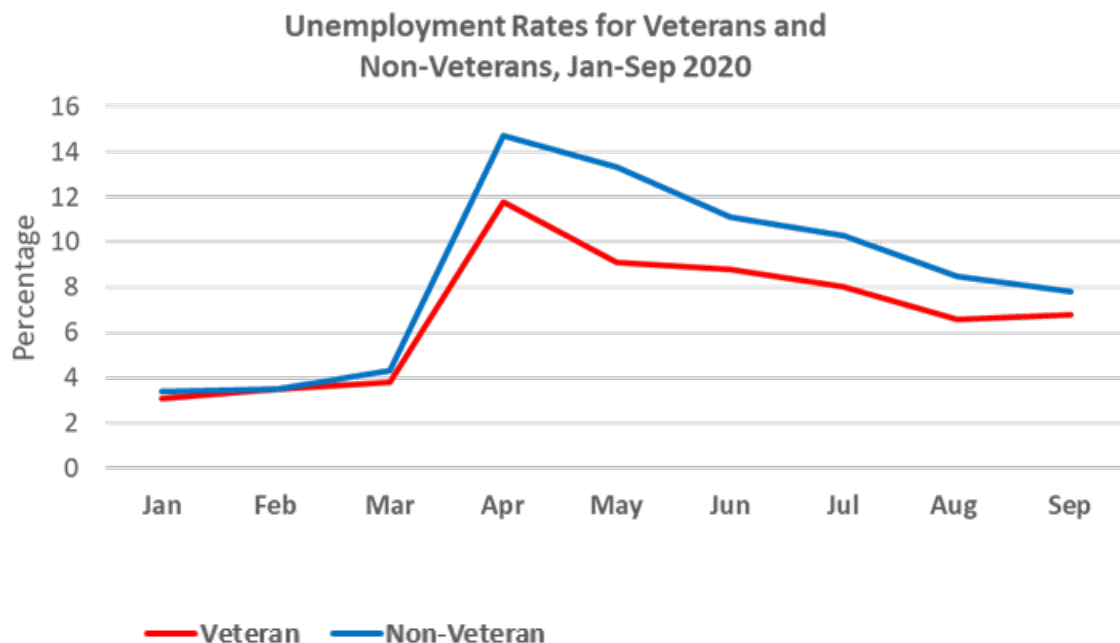
- Apprenticeship Placement Counselors (APCs) at eight installations (Bragg, Bliss, Miramar, Cherry Point, Norfolk, San Diego, Travis and Nellis)
- APCs work individually with TSMs to help place them in apprenticeships based upon their desired trade and post-separation location

**Military Spouse Employment Workshops**

- Pilot: October, 2020
- Full Implementation: January, 2021

Military Service	EN Pilot Location	Estimated total number of TSM/S Annually
USN	NS Norfolk	14,601
USMC	Camp Pendleton	9,000
Joint	JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam	3,332
USMC	MCAS Miramar	2,250
USA	Fort Benning	1,642
USA	Fort Sill	1,639
USMC	Cherry Point	1,562
USAF	Travis AFB	1,500
USMC	MCAB Okinawa	1,248
USA	USAG Bavaria	1,213
USN	CFA Yokosuka	1,213
Joint	Joint Base Charleston	900
USAF	Kadena AB, Okinawa Japan	900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>41,000</b>

3. [Latest Employment Numbers.](#) Overall unemployment rates continue to decline from post COVID peak in April and veteran unemployment rates continue to be lower than their non-veteran peers. In September 2020, the veteran unemployment rate was 6.8%, up from 6.6% last month. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was 7.8% in September.



The American Legion encourages all agencies involved with the transition of servicemembers must come together and ensure that both the servicemember and spouse are provided all the tools

necessary to achieve economic stability. It is encouraging to see these efforts from the Department of Labor / Veterans Affairs aligned with The American Legion's resolutions.

***Resolution No. 100: Accountability of the Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program (TAP).***

*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

## **TOPIC 5: VETERAN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

The US Department of Housing and Development (HUD) awards \$4 Million to help low-income veterans rehabilitate their homes in three states and DC: Louisiana, Michigan, District of Columbia and Georgia. HUD and the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced \$3.9 million in funding through the [Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot Program](#) (VHRMP) to help make homes more accessible for disabled veterans. Through the VHRMP program, grantees will make necessary physical modifications to address the needs of eligible veterans, including wheelchair ramps, widening doors, reconfiguring bathrooms, and modifying homes to accommodate a veteran's caregiver.

[https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/HUD\\_No\\_20\\_166](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_166)

HUD awarded more than \$9 million in Healthy Homes Production grants to twelve tribes and tribal agencies to protect children and families from home health and safety hazards.

[https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/HUD\\_No\\_20\\_165](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_165)



*HUD Awards over \$9 Million to Protect Families from Lead and Other Home Health Hazards*

*[Reported by Teresa Lewis]*

## **TOPIC 6: CAREER FAIRS**

ALL IN-PERSON CAREER FAIRS SCHEDULED THROUGH NOVEMBER HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, SUSPENDED, OR POSTPONED.

**The American Legion is working on future virtual workshops and career fairs.**

The National staff is currently working with the Department of North Carolina to host its next virtual career fair.

Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled 13,758, a decrease of 654 from the prior week.

*The mission of The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission is to take actions that affect the economic well-being of veterans, including issues relating to veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.*



## THE AMERICAN LEGION NORTH CAROLINA **VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR**

Employment Opportunities are Waiting for You. Register Now and Connect with Local and Nationwide Employers Looking to Hire.

Tuesday, November 17, 2020 ★ 10:00am-2:00pm (Eastern Time)



*[Reported by Ariel De Jesus]*

### TOPIC 7: SMALL BUSINESS

The American Legion continues to track programmatic changes to the Paycheck Protection Program authorized back in March of 2020. This loan forgiveness program was vital to veteran



small businesses as well as many of our Legion Posts and Departments, who have taken advantage of the loan. Now that the program has ended, Small Businesses, and non-profits are facing the challenges of reopening local economies and facing the administrative process of applying for PPP loan forgiveness.

Despite attesting during the application process how the funds would be used in accordance with the program, the government is requiring these small businesses and non-profits to complete and reverify how the loan was used. This might sound like a simply task, but the existing forgiveness guidance will require the loan recipients to invest a significant amount of time and resources into completing complex forms. According to an independent estimate, the forgiveness process has an effective cost of \$2,000 - \$4,000 and requires between 20 to 100 hours of work per business — collectively, this amounts to a \$7 billion hit.

To put it into context, one small business accounting firm we contacted said it took her team of CPAs and MBAs more than 100 hours to interpret the current PPP forgiveness guidance and build a template for their clients. Even with a “plug-and-play” template, it takes a trained accountant about three hours to fill in the required information and countless more hours by the business owners to collect the needed documentation and make the necessary calculations. Even the PPP EZ

form is too complicated for most small business owners.



The overwhelming majority of PPP recipients, however, do not have full-time financial professionals on their staff. Streamlining the forgiveness process for these businesses, those with loans less than \$150,000, would help approximately 85 percent of total PPP recipients.

Rather than requiring small businesses and non-profits to hire accountants or play one themselves, the government should streamline the PPP forgiveness process for the smallest businesses so these entrepreneurs can focus on rebuilding local economies and helping their customers.

Fortunately, there is a growing bipartisan coalition in the Senate and House of Representatives led by Sens. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and Reps. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.) and Fred Upton (R-Mich.) to require SBA to create a simple, one-page attestation form to forgive covered PPP loans of less than \$150,000. Nothing in the legislation prevents the audit of these loans for fraud, but it does prevent small businesses and non-profits from spending limited resources completing government paperwork.

A growing coalition of more than 140 groups representing businesses and lenders is urging Congress to quickly pass this legislation and a streamlined forgiveness process also has the support of Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and the consumer group Center for Responsible Lending.

*[Reported by Davy Leghorn]*

## TOPIC 7b: SMALL BUSINESS

The U.S. [Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](https://www.sba.gov/) is seeking public comments on two proposed rule changes. These changes will help some 50,000 small businesses to be eligible for federal government contracts. Additionally, 280 financial institutions will also qualify as small businesses. The SBA is seeking a revision of small business size standards for two sets of business categories. One includes eight sectors that include agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; utilities; construction under the RIN 3245-AG89. While the other, RIN 3245-AG90, covers businesses in transportation and warehousing; information; finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing. <https://smallbiztrends.com/2020/10/sba-small-business-definition-federal-contracts.html>



DC is launching a new \$3 million Small Business Resiliency Fund that will offer small District businesses \$10,000 in emergency operational funds. This money will assist in business model pivoting, marketing expenses, purchasing of personal protective equipment and disinfection products, and continued development of e-commerce and online shopping platforms. In order to be eligible, businesses must have a facility located in DC, employ 50 or fewer people, generate less than \$3 million in gross receipts, and be able to demonstrate that they have lost 25% or more of revenue due to the Pandemic. They also can't have any debt owed to the city in excess of \$100. <https://dcist.com/story/20/10/06/dc-small-business-grant-pivot-emergency-funds/>

*[Reported by Teresa Lewis]*

## TOPIC 8: EDUCATION/ CREDENTIALING

As part of the budget deal approved last week, Congress extended several financial protections for student veterans whose education plans have been disrupted by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The provisions were tucked into the continuing resolution signed into law on Sept. 30 and will move the end date for the host of GI Bill protections from December of this year to December 2021.

They include flexibility for Veterans Affairs officials to keep paying full housing stipends to students forced into online-only classes because of campus coronavirus mitigation efforts, and extensions of work-study programs that have been disrupted by those changes.

This past spring, lawmakers scrambled to pass legislation dealing with those issues, since statute at the time called for different payment rates for students enrolled in fully remote classes and in-person lessons. Without the change, thousands of students would have faced significant cuts in their housing payouts and other stipends, even as rent payments and other expenses remained unchanged.

Now, those protections will be extended past the current semester and into the 2021-2022 school year.

In a statement, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, said the move “helps these programs seamlessly continue into the next fiscal year to prevent disrupting veterans' lives, especially during this global pandemic.”

State and education leaders had hoped to return to normal operations this fall, after the classes were forced online or ended early amid the outbreak of coronavirus last spring. But efforts to reopen campuses have met mixed results in recent months, with several prominent schools closing in-person classes again as virus cases rose.



*Financial protections extended for student veterans dealing with campus coronavirus changes*

More than 7.4 million Americans have contracted the virus in the last seven months, and more than 209,000 have died from complications related to the illness.

Nearly one million individuals received some type of education benefits from the VA last school year.

The American Legion has strongly advocated for these protections to be advanced, with veterans' housing benefits on the line for Spring enrollments.

### **Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education**

*[Reported by John Kamin]*

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