

The Weekly Report

July 23, 2021

The latest news, views, and announcements

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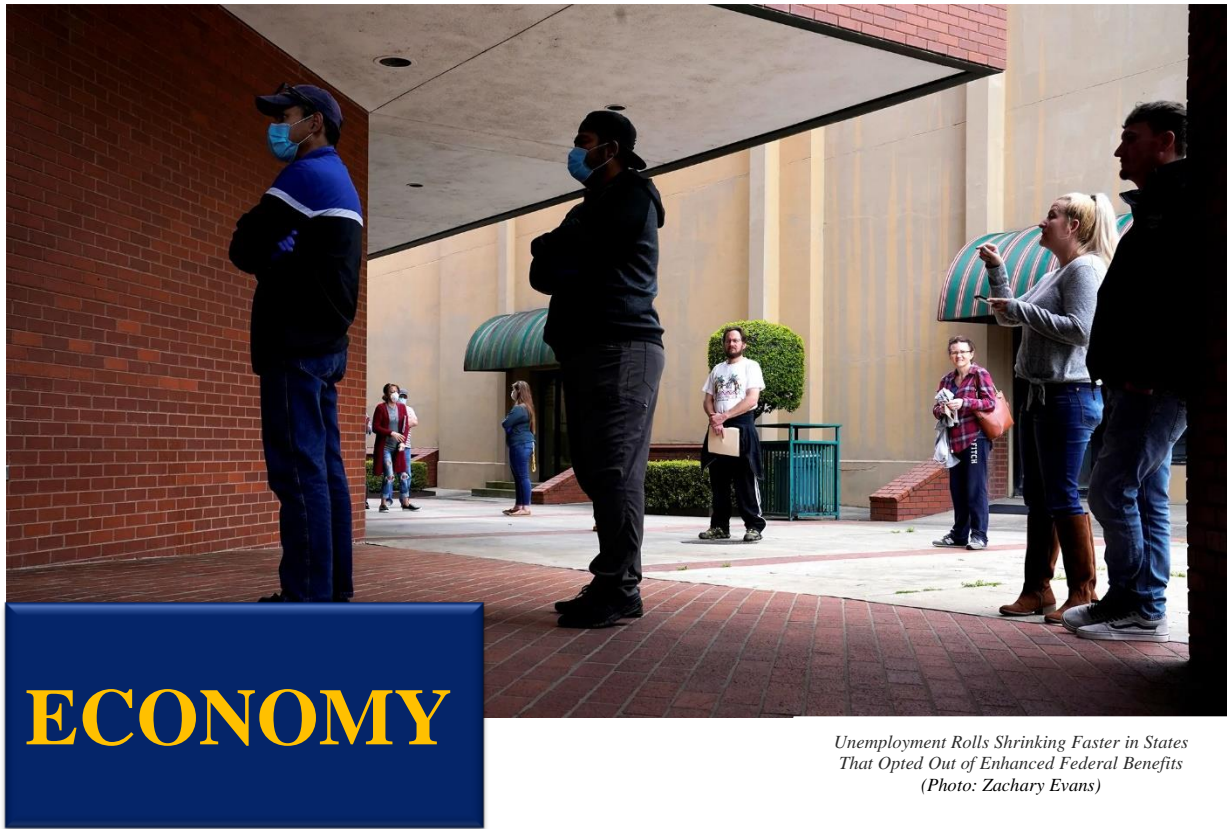
VE&E's Latest News Story See what's new today:



*(Commander Kenyetia Baker on left and
Officer Louis Hayes on right.)*

AUGUSTA, Ga (WJBF) – Commander Kenyetia Baker is making history by becoming the first and youngest female commander of American Legion Post 505. “Someone asked me why, well the answer is simple. I’m doing this because my soul tells me that I have to,” said Commander Kenyetia Baker. Standing at five feet tall, Commander Kenyetia Baker, has big plans for American Legion Post 505. “You don’t have to have a degree to serve, you don’t have to make your subject verb agree to serve you only need a heart full of grace,” said Commander Baker. “You never know looking at a person what they’ve been through. Me serving my country and then having to come out and living in a shelter with my two daughters wasn’t something I was proud of, but I’m using that as triumph,” said Commander Baker. Commander Baker made the transition from being homeless to now making history as the first and youngest woman to take on commander at post 505. After being sworn in Sunday, Baker says she’s ready to tackle a big issue, that’s impacting veterans in Augusta.

“Homelessness is my number one issue, I feel like we really need to get a hold of, because why do we have veterans who served our country so proudly and there the reason why we’re currently free, and they don’t have a place to lay their head,” said Commander Baker. American Legion is the largest veterans’ organization in the country. Its mission is to provide resources to veterans in the community. That includes housing. “It’s gotten very bad, especially during the pandemic, because they were not accepting anybody, not just veterans anybody,” said 11th District Officer Louis Hayes. Commander Baker hopes to encourage younger veterans to join and be active in the organization to help carry on their mission. She says her first order of business will be fixing up post 505. She says she’s already in contact with some contractors to begin that process.



*Unemployment Rolls Shrinking Faster in States That Opted Out of Enhanced Federal Benefits
(Photo: Zachary Evans)*

U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT ROLLS SHRINK AS STATES EXIT PANDEMIC PROGRAMS

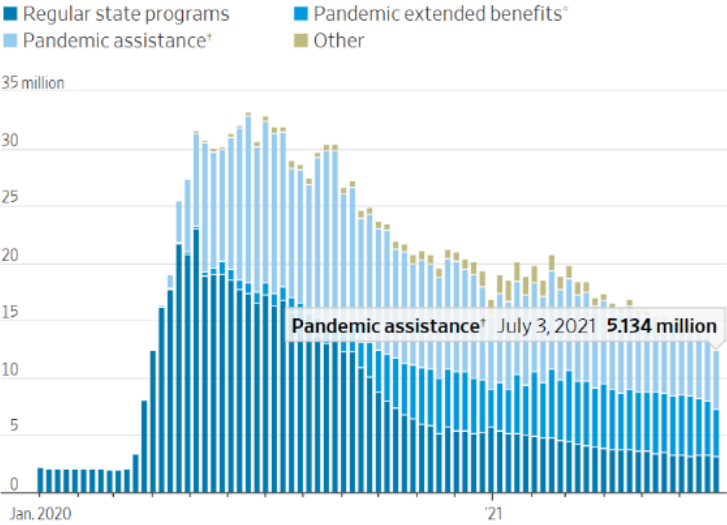
New applications for benefits rise as supply-chain issues continue in the auto industry

The number of Americans receiving jobless payments fell this month to the lowest level since early in the coronavirus pandemic, but first-time applications rose as supply constraints persist in the auto industry.

Continuing payments made through all unemployment benefit programs fell by 1.3 million in the week ended July 3, to 12.6 million, the Labor Department said Thursday. That was the lowest level since late March 2020, when new programs responding to the pandemic first came online.

In recent weeks about half of states have acted to end enhanced and extended unemployment benefits. The end of

Number of people claiming unemployment benefits, by program



Note: * Reflects Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation for those who exhausted other programs. * Reflects Pandemic Unemployment Assistance for self-employed and others not typically eligible.
Source: Labor Department

pandemic programs in Texas drove the latest decrease.

“The expectation is that this will spur more job-seeking among unemployed Texans as demand for labor improves,” said Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial Services. “Many employers have said that they would like to hire, but that the supply of workers has not kept up.”

Meanwhile, initial jobless claims, a proxy for new layoffs, rose by 51,000 to a seasonally adjusted 419,000 for the week ended July 17, the Labor Department said Thursday. The increase returned the new claims near to levels recorded in early June. The four-week moving average, which smooths out volatility in the weekly figures, increased by 750 to 385,250.

Economists said the increase could reflect seasonal adjustment variations in the data, which is typical in July, when the timing of the Independence Day holiday and scheduled factory shutdowns vary year to year.

The largest state-level increase came in Michigan, a state where auto production has been disrupted due to chip shortages. Kentucky, another state with auto plants, also reported a large rise in new jobless claims.

“Typically you’d see some plant shutdowns in autos, as well as other industries in the early part of July. Then those people would come back in the second half of the month,” said Stephen Stanley, chief economist at Amherst Pierpont Securities.

Economists also say layoffs and unemployment can remain elevated even when hiring is strong. That is because people who recently lost jobs might not be located near firms that are hiring, or might not have the skills necessary to take the job.

Despite last week’s increase, initial jobless claims and continuing payments have both trended down this year, largely reflecting an improving economy and steady hiring.

U.S. employers added 850,000 jobs in June, the largest gain in 10 months, and workers’ wages

rose briskly, signs of a strengthening labor market.

Overall benefit payments had surged in the spring of 2020, as millions of laid-off workers sought aid through state programs and others tapped programs established in response to the rise in unemployment during the pandemic. One new program made benefits available to self-employed and gig workers, who aren’t typically eligible, and another allowed unemployed workers to remain on benefits beyond the six months or less most states allow. Washington lawmakers also made benefits more generous, adding \$300 a week on top of state payments since late December.

Since rising above 33 million in June 2020, the number of unemployment-benefit payments has slowly fallen, though the pace of decline increased in recent weeks as many states moved to end pandemic programs. Pandemic program data isn’t seasonally adjusted.

Continuing unemployment payments through regular state programs decreased by 29,000 to a seasonally adjusted 3,236,000 for the week ended July 10, also the lowest level since March 2020. Most people on those programs could remain on benefits if they haven’t found employment, though many states have removed the \$300 enhancement.

Many Republicans and some economists say the benefits provide a disincentive to taking lower-wage jobs. Many Democrats and other economists say the payments were a lifeline for workers laid off during the pandemic and helped stabilize the economy.

Colorado is among the states retaining enhanced benefits until September, when they are due to expire nationwide.

Guard and Grace, a steakhouse in downtown Denver, is experiencing a resurgence in business as diners venture out and tourism picks up, said General Manager Jeff Stoltman. But the restaurant is struggling to find workers to meet that demand, which he attributes in part to

enhanced benefits, and as a result is keeping its dining room closed for lunch service.

“It’s a slower process than it ever has been to find workers,” said Mr. Stoltman. “People apply but don’t show up for interviews. Maybe they’re finding employment elsewhere, but it could also be that they’re meeting job-search requirements but don’t really want a job.”

Most states require unemployment recipients to demonstrate that they are actively searching for a job.

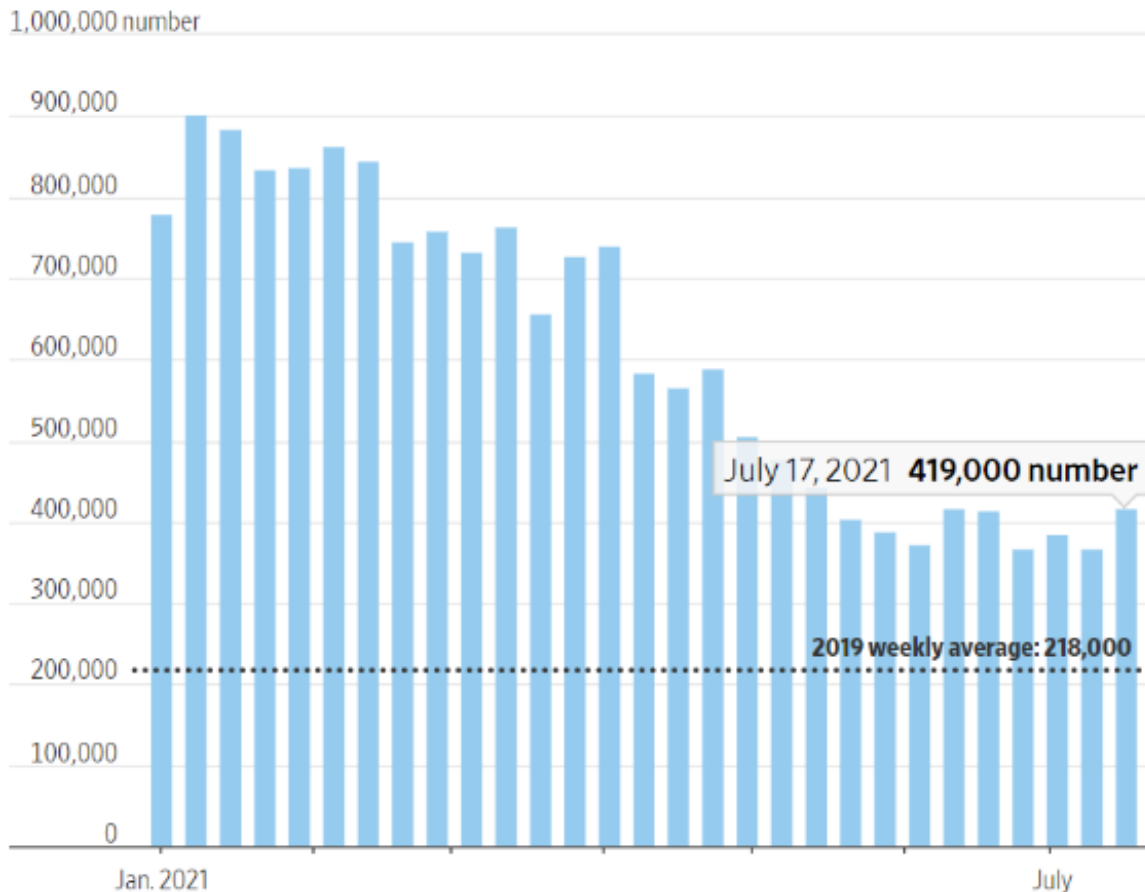
The pace of the economy’s recovery in the near term could hinge on how the Delta variant of the coronavirus affects the pandemic. Many

economists view the variant as a risk, but not a large enough one to change forecasts for robust growth in the second half of the year.

Belinda Román, assistant professor of economics at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, said last week’s increase in initial claims appears to be tied to manufacturing and supply-chain disruptions. But she sees the possibility that a worsening pandemic could keep potential workers on the sidelines.

“Some people might just decide to stay home with their kids because what happens is that if schools close again, mandates become more severe, or if businesses don’t reopen, people start to plan ahead,” she said.

New filings for jobless benefits



Note: Seasonally adjusted.

Source: U.S. Employment and Training Administration via St. Louis Fed



EMPLOYMENT

(U.S. Army) Military.com
(Photo: Blake Stilwell)

HOW VETERANS CAN GET FREE TRAINING IF THEY LOST A JOB TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The year 2020 was hard on all of us, but it was harder on some than others. The United States lost an estimated 10 million jobs during the global COVID-19 pandemic. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the December 2019 veteran unemployment rate was at an all-time low of 2.9%. At the height of the pandemic, it was a staggering 11.3%, and by December 2020, it dropped to 6.3%. The number hasn't stabilized since.

All this means is that if a veteran lost a job due to COVID-19, they aren't alone. Some veterans and family members may feel like the Department of Veterans Affairs has nothing to offer if they've used all of their GI Bill benefits or aren't eligible for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E), Survivors' and Dependents' Educational

Assistance (DEA) or the Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP).

But that's not the case. For those who aren't currently eligible for GI Bill benefits or any of the other programs the VA offers for educational and vocational training, they still can find help with [Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program](#) (VRRAP).

The VRRAP offers the same coverage for training that would be eligible under the GI Bill or Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses, but it's intended to provide associates-level and certification training for the most high-demand careers in America.

Best of all, it's a program that offers 12 months of training and a living stipend similar to the one

provided by the Post-9/11 GI Bill -- along with the same rates.

These high-demand career fields (as determined by the Department of Labor) contain the usual information technology, medical and skilled trade jobs offered by many public, private and nonprofit veteran employment programs. They also offer training in other fields, such as bookkeeping, sales, business management, barber and salon training, and more.

Schools and training programs may vary by location. Simply choose the school you might want to attend -- online training is available for some programs -- [from the VRRAP-approved institutions list](#) and see what careers and degree or certificate programs are available for the school you want to attend.

It's important to know that veterans eligible for other programs, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill, aren't eligible for the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program. Veterans must be between 22 and 66 years old, unemployed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, not 100% disabled and not

currently enrolled in another federal or state jobs program.

Veterans also cannot receive VRRAP benefits and training while getting unemployment or CARES Act benefits.

The VRRAP will be only available to 17,250 participants, and payments will end on Dec. 11, 2022, or when the \$386 million funding is spent.

To get started, check out the [possible career fields listed by the Department of Labor](#) and see whether your local college or training institute from the [approved institutions list on the VA's website](#) offers that training. (If it doesn't, you can try to find another local school that does.) Then go to the VA's [Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program website](#) to apply.

Facing unemployment due to the catastrophic global pandemic and the resulting economic backlash may mean hard times, but this is a way for veterans to get new training in a high-demand career field for free -- and get paid to do it.

U-D MERCURY TO START VEHICLE CYBER SECURITY INSTITUTE WITH DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GRANT

The University of Detroit Mercy recently received a \$1.12-million grant from the United States Department of Defense to establish the Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute, a regional-based, cybersecurity consortium.

Led by Detroit Mercy, the consortium consists of academic institutions in southeast Michigan and includes University of Arizona as a research partner. The partnership is meant to expand and enhance the cybersecurity engineering workforce through an applied curriculum developed in consultation with industry partners. The consortium also supports upskilling and reskilling for vehicle cybersecurity by

prioritizing underrepresented populations, military personnel, and veterans. Instruction is scheduled to begin this fall, the release said.

The Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute initially includes Detroit Mercy, pipeline institutions Washtenaw Community College, Oakland Community College, and Macomb Community College, and University of Arizona, which will provide research support to the consortium through its research institute that was established in 2014. University of Michigan and Henry Ford College will join the consortium as it enters its second phase during the 2023-24 academic year.

Paul Spadafora, director of Professional Engineering Programs for Detroit Mercy's College of Engineering & Science, said it is

"Without an increase to the workforce now, the cybersecurity risk to DoD and commercial ground vehicles will keep falling further behind the increasing threats from actors in multi-domain contested environments," said Spadafora, who is a co-principal investigator for the consortium, along with College of Engineering & Science Dean Katherine Snyder. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of cybersecurity engineers is projected to grow 31% between 2019-29, much faster than the average for all occupations. In Michigan, the average pays for cybersecurity engineers in 2019 was \$91,750, or \$44.11 per hour.

To address the growing need for cybersecurity engineers, the Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute will build on existing relationships with automotive industry and government partners to provide students with valuable real-world experience.

"The talent level, funding and equipment in metro Detroit is plentiful and cutting edge," Spadafora said. "The transformational work being conducted on autonomous vehicles by the U.S. Army DEVCOM Ground Vehicle System Center, General Motors, Ford Motor Company, Fiat

The Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute aims to become self-sustained after the fourth year of the program, with goals of developing qualified cybersecurity graduates and creating a multi-pathway educational structure that meets the needs of the vehicle industry and government partners.

Detroit Mercy is experienced in electrical engineering and computer science, autonomous and electric vehicle, and cybersecurity-related curricula, offering students a variety of undergraduate, graduate and certificate options through the College of Engineering & Science as

important to establish the consortium because cybersecurity is a growing threat.

Chrysler Automobiles and numerous start-ups and supplier partners makes the metro Detroit area uniquely qualified to partner with Detroit Mercy and its consortium partners."

Curriculum for the consortium will be developed with the workforce in mind. It includes associate, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees, stackable graduate certificates, hands-on laboratory training and cybersecurity immersion camps for high school students.

“U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of cybersecurity engineers is projected to grow 31% between 2019-29, much faster than the average for all occupations”

As vice president of Global Cybersecurity at General Motors and chairman of the Automotive Information Sharing and Analysis Center, Kevin Tierney sees the automotive industry's shortage of cybersecurity personnel firsthand. Tierney believes the industry will benefit from a cybersecurity consortium, like

the Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute.

"We envision that the Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute will lead in the education of our current and future company employees, expand the competency of our workforce to design and protect secure physical cyber systems, including those in electric and autonomous vehicles," Tierney said.

well as the University's Center for Cybersecurity & Intelligence Studies.

The grant is awarded through Griffiss Institute's Virtual Institutes for Cyber and Electromagnetic Spectrum Research and Employ program, which establishes cyber institutes at higher learning institutions with the purpose of critical cyber operational skill development for future military and civilian leaders.

In addition to the Metro-Detroit Regional Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute, Detroit Mercy's College of Engineering & Science leads several

consortiums, including ReBUILDDetroit, iDRAW and Fly-CURE.

Detroit Mercy’s commitment to helping veterans and military personnel achieve success has been recognized both locally and nationally, earning high marks from Military Friendly Schools and the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. The University has also been designated a Center of Academic Excellence by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency.

The American Legion applauds the initiative made to up- and re-skill veterans into the cybersecurity field, which falls in line with our **Resolution No. 305: Support the Development of Veterans On-The-Job Training Opportunities**, whereby the American Legion supports development and implementation of training programs for eligible veterans in the public and private sectors.

ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- *The national unemployment rate is 5.9 percent (June 2021).*
- *Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 5.2 percent.*
- *Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is 9.5 percent.*
- *In June 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was 4.8%. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was 5.9% in June.*
- *Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled 571, an increase of 6 from the preceding week.*

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	
	June 2020	June 2021	June 2020	June 2021	June 2020	June 2021
Unemployed	776	437	675	375	101	62
Unemployment rate	8.6	4.8	8.5	4.7	9.6	5.5



CHANGES TO VA EDUCATION BENEFITS TO GO INTO EFFECT AUG. 1, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs faces an Aug. 1 deadline to implement changes to its GI Bill program approved by Congress earlier this year.

Congress in January approved the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, named for former Republican leaders of the House and Senate veterans' affairs committees. The new law is more than 340 pages long and aims to help various segments of the veteran population, including women, Native Americans and students, as well as veterans experiencing homelessness.

More than 30 measures included in the new law are intended to improve the use of VA education benefits. Many of those provisions go into effect Aug. 1, ahead of the fall semester.

“Isakson-Roe included over 30 sections providing important protections for students ... making sweeping changes and expansions to veteran education benefits and mandating additional oversight of educational institutions to ensure student veterans are receiving a high-quality education,” said Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif.

Levin and other members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs met Tuesday to track the VA's progress with implementing the education-focused portions of the law. Charmain Bogue, executive director of the VA education service, told lawmakers the department would meet the Aug. 1 deadline.

“The VA has taken significant steps to implement the education-related steps in a timely and efficient manner,” she said.

Bogue said the VA has already implemented one section that requires law schools to be approved by specialized accrediting agencies in order to receive GI Bill money. The department also implemented an amendment to its work-study program that now allows student veterans to receive credit for working in congressional offices.

The VA was early to implement an expansion of the Fry Scholarship, which goes to children and spouses of service members who died in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. The scholarship was expanded to include children and spouses of service members who died while not on active duty. It can also now go to children and spouses of members of the Selected Reserve who died from service-connected disabilities.

The agency has yet to implement a portion of the bill that requires students to verify online every month that they are still enrolled in school. The new law states that the VA must cut off students' monthly housing allowances if they fail to verify their enrollment for two consecutive months. Bogue said that the VA would implement the measure in two phases, starting Aug. 1 with students in non-college degree programs. It will be required of all student veterans starting at the end of 2021.

Another major portion of the new law requires schools to be eligible for the Federal Student Aid program in order to receive GI Bill funds. If schools aren't eligible, they can apply for waivers. Bogue said the VA has communicated with schools about the new requirements and has already received some waiver applications.

The law also aims to penalize predatory schools that use false advertising to sell poor education programs. Starting Aug. 1, the VA will impose limitations on the types of advertising that schools can use and still receive GI Bill funds. The law created a tiered penalty system for schools that fail to comply with the law.

Levin said Tuesday that the changes "mark a new era for quality education for our veterans."

"This fall, student veterans will know more than ever how far they can go with their benefits," he said.

The American Legion supports legislation to improve the post 9/11 GI Bill as found in our **Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill.**

FULOP AND O'DEA LAUNCH NEW 'HELMETS TO HARDHATS' UNION CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM FOR VETERANS



Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop and Hudson County Commissioner Bill O'Dea (D-2) joined partners representing veterans and the union construction building trades to launch their "Helmets to Hardhats" program this morning.

The program is designed to help National Guard Reserve, retired, and transitioning active-duty military members connect with career and training opportunities in construction and assist with job placement.

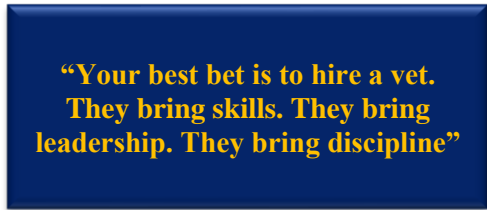
"We have been very successful in getting women and minorities into construction union apprenticeships and are excited with now having the resources provided by the state to recruit and train military veterans so they too can have a career as a laborer, carpenter, plumber, or truck driver," said O'Dea, also the executive director of the Elizabeth Development Corporation.

“They gave for our country, and now we can give back to them.”

Utilizing a \$304,000 grant from the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development to the EDC, the women and minority veteran program will launch its first initiative in Jersey City to serve Hudson County veterans. It will soon also expand to serve Bergen, Essex, and Union Counties.

However, O’Dea noted they wouldn’t turn anyone away who is not from those counties who is eligible for the program, with 30 to 40 individuals receiving aid from the program initially.

In Jersey City, Fulop is providing support to the application process. The Jersey City Employment and Training Program has also been instrumental throughout the implementation process.



Specifically, commitments for service are being received through the Division of Veterans Affairs and the Hudson County/Jersey City Workforce Development Board.

Hudson County Building Trade President Pat Kelleher was instrumental in garnering support for the application, as were LIUNA Local No. 3, OPCMIA Local No. 29, Teamsters Local 560, and Carpenters Local No. 253

“Many individuals don’t have the \$800 to \$1,000 it takes to get involved in a union,” O’Dea said. He explained that includes training, testing, a physical, and initial fees, along with OSHA certification and access to a career.

“A union apprenticeship is not a job. It’s a career opportunity.”

He explained the worth of a union apprenticeship if one spends a 30-year career in the union. Fulop noted that the 20th anniversary of 9/11 is coming up this fall and many have served in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“I’m one of the seven percent of Americans who are veterans. Jersey City is a diverse community and home to many veterans who proudly serve their country and return home to find themselves in need of work,” Fulop explained.

“This program provides that direct connection to meaningful employment, which can often be a major challenge for veterans. As those people come back home, I know first hand the struggle that they have for them and their families to find employment, to find a meaningful career, not just a job.”

Ward A Councilwoman Denise Ridley noted the tumult in the economy due to the pandemic.

“It’s very important that we give people skills that they can use and that are not going out of style ... That’s something you can’t automate.”

“Your best bet is to hire a vet. They bring skills. They bring leadership. They bring discipline. They’re loyal. They get the job done ... It prevents homelessness. It prevents suicide,” added American Legion State Vice Commander Jack Dunne.

In addition to hands-on training, OSHA-30 certification, and placement assistance, efforts will be made to ensure the long-term success of each veteran that participates in the program.

Furthermore, Kelleher noted they’re working on building a veterans shelter in Hoboken.

“Cream rises to the top when you’re doing the best job. This grant is vital to increase the participation of women and minority veterans in the building trades.

LIUNA Local 3 Business Manager Paul Roldan noted that in 2015, Fulop launched a program to help homeless veterans by securing them union construction jobs renovating a building.

“We look forward to providing women and minority veterans with not just a job, but a career. Being part of the Union guarantees these veterans will have a solid career path that includes fair wages, benefits, and a safe working environment,” he said.

Laquan Walker, a veteran who spent eight years in the military is a graduate of the program and

spoke well of it. After working in security, Walker said he met O’Dea and Kelleher, which led to him joining a union.

“That basically led me on the path to a career, not a job.”

MURPHY SIGNS BILLS THAT WILL ENABLE VETERANS MORE ACCESS TO HIGHER ED, EXPANDED PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Bills that grant veterans and servicemembers easier access to higher education, expand access to the disabled veterans’ property tax exemption and establish an annual grant program within the Troops to College Program to recognize institutions of higher education that offer extensive veteran programs and services, were signed by Gov. Phil Murphy on Thursday.

Murphy said the decision to sign the bills was an easy call.

“Our veterans and servicemembers have put their lives on the line for their state and for their country,” he said. “The least we can do for them is to make their lives easier by expanding access to higher education, broadening eligibility for the disabled veterans’ property tax exemption and encouraging higher education institutions to provide needed services. This legislation will doubtlessly help our veterans and servicemembers in their civilian lives and recognize their service properly.”

The bill are as follows:

S278 broadens the scope of existing law to benefit a wider military community that includes servicemembers who are unable to complete a course due to deployment, mobilization, reassignment or other military obligation. The bill directs each public institution of higher education to establish policies and procedures to refund course tuition and fees and permit the late registration of students who are veterans or

servicemembers affected by deployment, mobilization, reassignment or other military obligation. Under the bill, the institution cannot charge a late fee or similar penalty on a registration submitted pursuant to the bill’s provisions.



S956 exempts from property taxes totally and permanently disabled veterans and their surviving spouses who occupy a unit in a cooperative or mutual housing corporation in which they are tenant shareholders. The bill requires the Division of Taxation to promulgate the necessary implementing regulations, which will include provisions that would require cooperatives and mutual housing corporations to pass the full amount of the property tax exemption on to the tenant shareholder who qualified for the benefit.

S961 creates an annual grant program within the Troops to College Program. The grant program will be developed by the secretary of higher

education in consultation with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The secretary will annually select up to three institutions of higher education, public or private, to receive a \$150,000 Troops to College Grant. In order to receive a grant, an institution must demonstrate that it is offering a comprehensive array of services, benefits, and programs to veterans attending the institution.

Brig. Gen. Lisa Hou, the adjutant general and commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, said the bills affirm New Jersey's commitment to our veterans.

“One bill will provide grants to institutions of higher education that assist veterans with programs and services,” she said. “Tenant shareholders in cooperatives and mutual housing corporations can finally use the property tax exemption that homeowners have used for years. Uniformed service members attending public colleges now have additional rights, such as extended registration time each semester, so they can continue their education while fulfilling their military obligations.”

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Education

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a House Committee on Veteran Affairs: “Implementation of Education Provisions on the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020”. The committee met Tuesday, July 20, 2021 to track the VA's progress with implementing the education-focused portions. Some of the VA's new implementations include an amendment to its work-study program that now allows student veterans to receive credit for working in congressional offices. Despite the problems, the VA has done a wonderful job in updating institution's GI Bill funding, creating veteran employment and education programs, and implementing deadlines for future work. The timelines they have established is coming up quickly and they seem to have everything lined up for completion. Despite not implementing the provisions that are left, it sounds as if they will not have a problem getting the funding and legislation done in a timely manner for those programs. Some questions directed at the VA were:

- What is the current statistics on the VET TEC Pilot program?
- Can you talk about the digital GI Bill Project?
- How does the VA approves international schools for the GI Bill programs?
- How is VA designing risk-based surveys for schools under the Department of Education's scrutiny and how does is the Education Financial solvency of the schools being weighed in these risk-based surveys?
- Can you provide us an update on the VRRAP?

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a Veterans Benefits Administration Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education (VBAVACO) meeting on GI Bill Updates. The purpose of the meeting was to inform relevant GI Bill stakeholders about recent updates to student enrollment verification, DGI Focus groups, Isakson Roe Act Implementation, and the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP). Staff of the VBA VACO also provided statistics for claims and VRRAP. VRRAP continues to be a successful program which has attracted thousands of potential candidates. Approximately 60% of those who apply to the program receive certificates of eligibility. Based

on the interest and outcomes of the program, VRRAP may serve as a model for future efforts for training and employment programs. Some items discussed were:

- Isakson Roe Act Implementation
- Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)
- GI Bill Comparison Tool
- Program statistics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) meeting on GI Bill. The meeting provided an opportunity for GI Bill stakeholders to receive updates on the GI Bill risk based survey. The team developing the survey remarked repeatedly on how many concerning factors with schools were identified in the limited pilot program and how effective the survey was in discovering these factors that previously went unnoticed. The model is both scalable and replicable, which bodes well for external validity. Another significant insight is the potential savings to schools from the using the new model. Some items discussed were:

- Risk Based Survey Review Pilot
- Lack of oversight
- Create a national oversight model
- Pilot Program State Approving Agencies (SAAs) and Model



HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

REP. LIEU SEEKS TO FIGHT HOMELESSNESS WITH A \$5 BILLION FEDERAL PROGRAM

Tackling homelessness has traditionally been the responsibility of local governments, but given the scope of the crisis in California and across the nation, Congressman Ted Lieu believes it's time for federal action.

That is why he, alongside California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla, introduced the Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act.

This bill would authorize \$1 billion in grants annually for five years for local governments to spend on supportive housing models with comprehensive services and intensive case management.

Lieu said that if the bill passes, the City of Santa Monica would be an excellent grant candidate, because of its "track record of being aggressive on dealing with homelessness" and its "very competent staff."

Lieu represents California's 33rd District, encompassing the coastal areas of Los Angeles from Palos Verdes through Malibu, and has witnessed firsthand the escalating and deleterious impact of homelessness on local communities. He came on the Inside the Daily Press podcast this week to discuss why he believes this bill is the best approach to tackle the issue.

"My view is just because the federal government has only had limited jurisdiction in the past, does not mean that's the way it should be," said Lieu. "Traditionally we have just been very involved with veterans who are homeless. I think we need to greatly expand that and help cities and towns to address homelessness."

The grant program requirements align with the model of permanent supportive housing that the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority upholds as the gold standard of homeless intervention.

In this model unhoused individuals are moved into permanent living spaces, not shelters, and are

provided with a range of services aimed to tackle the underlying issues contributing to their homelessness. This includes health care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and job training.

While permanent supportive housing sounds excellent in theory, projects have drawn criticism for being both expensive and very slow to build.

For example, in 2016 Los Angeles voters passed Measure HHH, a \$1.2 billion bond measure to construct permanent supportive housing. By September 2020, nearly four years later, only three new housing projects had opened and the average cost per unit was almost \$559,000.

Despite this, Rep. Lieu said he believes this is the best approach for federal funding, as it simultaneously tackles all of the challenges facing unhoused individuals and can prevent them from falling back into homelessness.

"What we know from the research is that it's not enough to just put a roof over someone's head," said Lieu. "You've got to also give them services so that they can eventually transition to being out of homelessness, and that's what the bill does."

Lieu identified both substance abuse treatment and job training as two essential services for tackling the current nature of homelessness.

"I'm a big believer in substance abuse treatment programs as well as drug courts," said Lieu. "I think we need to shift to a view of drug use as a medical addiction rather than as something to be punished."

Although the bill is the first of its kind, Lieu believes it does have a chance of becoming law. It was simultaneously introduced in the House and Senate and is co-sponsored by two Republican representatives.

"I feel optimistic because it has bipartisan, bicameral support and that's generally a good

sign. At the same time, there's a lot of issues that we're dealing with in Congress," said Lieu. "Now we're focused on getting the Americans Jobs Plan as American Families Plan through, but I'm glad we've introduced this bill into the mix for senators and members of Congress to consider."

To hear more about why Rep. Lieu believes this bill is an intelligent strategy for tackling homelessness, listen to this week's episode of the Inside the Daily Press Podcast at <https://www.smdp.com/pod>.

MEASURE TARGETS VETERAN HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMING

U.S. Reps. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) and Salud Carbajal (D-CA) reintroduced the Home For The Brave Act of 2021, which addresses veteran homelessness while bolstering disabled veterans' housing program access.

The legislation would exempt veterans' VA disability benefits from counting toward total income as a means of determining eligibility for housing assistance programs via the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

"Our veterans have put their lives at great risk to keep all of us safe back home," Smucker said. "To return home and be priced out of housing assistance simply because they receive service-related disability benefits is just plain wrong. Our district has made great strides to eliminate veteran homelessness, and I am proud to stand with my constituents in this noble effort."

Financial benefits for service-connected disabilities are presently considered as income regarding HUD eligibility for housing assistance programs. Some veterans are deemed ineligible for the housing programs because their disability benefits place them at a higher income level.

Carbajal said it is wrong to deny veterans access to housing assistance programs due to disability benefits received for service-related injury or illness.

"I am glad to work across the aisle on this legislation to assist our veterans experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity on the Central Coast and across the country," he said. "They stepped up to defend our nation, and now Congress must step up for them by ending this egregious housing discrimination against our disabled veterans."

COALITION AIMS TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

To ameliorate the issue of homeless veterans, Nevada County has fostered a partnership with the Built for Zero initiative to end homelessness among military veterans.

Built for Zero's big picture goal is to bring together more than 80 communities nationwide to end homelessness. Numerous nonprofits, state, and federal agencies joined the national team to cooperate and improve data that identifies and mitigates veteran homelessness. One aim is to reach a milestone known as functional zero.

Functional zero for veteran homelessness is accomplished when the county has so few veterans experiencing homelessness it is virtually none.

"We are in striking distance of functional zero and are excited to engage the broader community to get there," said Ryan Gruver, Nevada County Health and Human Services director. "Initiatives like this are a great example of when we say, 'better together.'"

One person at the forefront of the effort is David West, Nevada County Veterans Services officer. His office meets every week with the county’s homeless outreach team. They provide wrap-around services, physical and mental health, substance abuse and housing assistance in order to transition to a housed environment, West said.

People can connect to those services by calling 2-1-1 and accessing the Connecting Point 2-1-1 service. Homeless veterans can then be included on a coordinated entry list to get veterans benefits.

“But there’s not a lot of open availability right now,” said West. “The point of publicizing the campaign now is to bring awareness to our goals and solicit landlords.”

The objective is to find additional housing, West said. Each veteran is unique, and it is necessary to tailor solutions to their needs. “We’ll help get them their documents,” he said. “The most important is the DD-214, the discharge papers from the service.”

Brendan Phillips is the Nevada County housing resource manager. Since fiscal year 2019-20 he has collaborated with nonprofits AMI Housing, Connecting Point 2-1-1, and Volunteers of America.

“We make sure we have quality, real time data through our coordinated entry system that creates a ‘by name list’ to track everybody who calls up, and so we know through the list who the chronically homeless are and set up a plan tailor-made for the individual.”

What helps keep those lists up to date are the nonprofits assisting Phillips. Unfortunately, some veterans decline to engage with Housing and Community Services or the nonprofits. “Evidence suggests when you have chronically homeless the cost to intervene for those individuals goes up exponentially,” Phillips said. “But not all people on the street are drug users. Some vets learn using drugs can be a mechanism to cope with the mental, physical, and spiritual pain they endure by being homeless. So, we learned strategies to improve outcomes.”

No two people have the same circumstances, Phillips said. His department’s personal touch can elicit best practices to resolve individual homeless challenges.

What is Built for Zero?

Built for Zero is a movement of more than 80 communities in the U.S. redefining what is possible in ending homelessness.

The problems	The Built for Zero solutions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A problem that many touch, but no single agency or organization owns A definition of success limited to program outcomes Efforts driven by static, aggregate, and nameless data A problem solely understood as a problem of resource scarcity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A command center with shared, community-wide accountability for ending homelessness A definition of success of whether the number of people experiencing homelessness is driving zero Efforts driven by comprehensive, real-time, individual level data on everyone experiencing homelessness A problem understood as a systems issue that requires data-driven, targeted housing investments 			

13 COMMUNITIES HAVE REACHED FUNCTIONAL ZERO FOR VETERAN OR CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

49 HAVE DRIVEN MEASURABLE REDUCTIONS

“Vets may not have had good experience with hospitals,” said Phillips. “Emergency rooms can deal with acute needs but may not be able to assess the myriad of problems that contribute to homelessness in a walk-in environment.”

Phillips’ nonprofit partners — along with the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development — also provide critical input to get veterans housed. “It’s a new day in Nevada County,” said Phillips. “It could be any number of ideas. But we need to connect with landlords and property managers or anyone who has a housing recommendation to step up so we can mitigate the homeless situation.”

Nancy Baglietto, board president of the Nevada County continuum of Care, said her organization voted this month to support and endorse the county’s plan.

“Like many nonprofits, part of what makes this effort powerful is we’re all collaborating to end veteran homelessness,” she said. “We see it as a critical element because the veterans served our country, and they need our help. Built for Zero helps ensure that systems are in place that if a

veteran experiences homelessness, it will be both a rare and brief occurrence.”

Another nonprofit, Volunteers for America, has been working with Built for Zero since 2017, said case manager supervisor Kia Phillips, no relation to Brendan Phillips.

“It’s like a revolving door,” said Kia Phillips. “We try to get veterans connected with resources such as VASH (Veteran’s Affairs Service Supportive Housing). It’s Section 8 for veterans,

as quickly as possible.” They also work to secure veterans’ unemployment claims, VA claims, supplemental security income and Social Security claims.

“We do whatever we can to supplement veterans’ income,” Kia Phillips said. “We have an employment team, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program that works for Volunteers for America and is funded by the Department of Labor.”



SMALL BUSINESS

STARTUPS: A GREAT NEXT MISSION FOR VETERANS

I used to be a suits, ties and wingtips kind of guy, but nowadays my uniform is a hoodie and a baseball cap. This wasn’t the plan – I kind of stumbled here by following a hunch.

When I left the Army in 2010, if you’d have suggested I join the tech industry or the startup economy, I’d have laughed at you. I thought tech meant I needed to know how to write code (I didn’t, and still don’t), and that startups were

made up of desperate risk-takers, betting their every penny on some crazy idea that was more likely to result in their own personal bankruptcy than becoming the next Jeff Bezos. Despite my willingness to risk my own life in the Army, I'd have scoffed at my (mostly incorrect) perception of the risk involved in joining a startup. I wouldn't have spent another five minutes thinking about it.

While considering what steps to take after working for Syracuse University, a little voice in my head told me that the tech industry seemed exciting, even though I knew nothing about it. After reading Ashlee Vance's biography of Elon Musk, something told me that I'd be better off learning as much as I could about how the future was being made than reading yet another account of Teddy Roosevelt's life. Though I was intimidated by the opportunity to lead [LinkedIn's military program](#), I took the leap, knowing that the move to the West Coast would broaden my horizons in ways I couldn't yet anticipate.

I dove into learning about the industry. I used my tuition reimbursement benefit from LinkedIn to pay for Stanford's Ignite program, which runs [a cohort specifically for post-9/11 Veterans](#). I tried everything I could to learn how LinkedIn's tech was built and how it worked. I did a stint at a venture capital firm to learn from investors working with some of the world's most promising startups. Harboring dreams of starting my own company, I decided that it would be smart to work at a startup before trying to create one from scratch. After a few conversations about our mutual goals, Mike Slagh welcomed me onto the team at Shift. Without knowing it at the time, each of these steps, each caused by its own hunch, unlocked the next.

It turns out that working for a startup helped answer some of the biggest existential questions I'd been wrestling with since my deployment to Iraq. Working for a small company provides me the same sense of connection to a mission that I felt when I was in uniform. Instead of being a tiny cog in a giant machine, I work with a tight-knit team that is as dedicated to a mission, driven by purpose, and committed to one another as anyone can be (short

of pledging to give their life on each others' behalf). We all wear many hats. We pitch in wherever needed. We stare down uncertainty regularly, and as they say, we either "find a way or make one."

The post-9/11 generation of Veterans is hard at work transforming industries and leaving our mark on the future of our country, either helping to build startups founded by others or creating their own. Over the past few years, Shift has helped more than 100 startups and small businesses hire more Veterans, and today that mission grows. I'm proud to announce a significant step forward: in August we will welcome 50+ new startups onto our talent marketplace that makes it easy for some of the most ambitious new companies in America to find and message forward-thinking military Veterans.

Through this partnership with America's startups and through our ever-growing, free career transition and advancement programs, military service members and Veterans have an easier time identifying and pursuing opportunities at some of the country's fastest-growing startups. If there's a voice inside of you saying you might like to give this a shot – that you might like to reconnect to your former sense of purpose – that you might like to join a tight-knit team and once again feel necessary to mission success, I'd encourage you to check us out. No matter where you are on your journey, you're one of us, and we'd be proud to help you find your way.

Upcoming Program Kickoffs

- [Career Accelerator](#) (4 weeks): August 2, September 7, & October 12
- [Navigating Next](#) (5 weeks): August 16, September 27, & November 8
- [Defense Ventures](#) (8 weeks): October 4

Learn more at <https://www.shift.org/navigating-next>.



USDA ANNOUNCES PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE FOR TIMBER HARVESTERS AND HAULERS

Farm Service Agency Will Begin Accepting Applications On July 22



USDA offers assistance for timber harvesters, haulers
(Photo: Carol Ryan Dumas Capital Press)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

"USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative promised to get financial assistance to a broader set of producers and today's announcement delivers on that promise," said Secretary Vilsack. "On top of the existing challenges associated with natural disasters and trade, the pandemic caused a major disruption for loggers and timber haulers including lack of access to wood processing mills. This industry plays a critical role in our nation's economy and we are proud to support these hard-working loggers and truckers as they get back on track."

"Like many facets of the agriculture industry, the logging industry has experienced its share of financial hardships throughout the pandemic," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "We're happy to work with the U.S. Forest Service to develop this new program to provide critically needed support."

“We’ve heard from loggers and truckers whose livelihoods were significantly impacted this past year by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are pleased that USDA can help alleviate some of the financial burden,” said Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen. “I encourage those logging and log-hauling businesses hardest hit by the pandemic to learn more about the assistance offered through this new program.”

Program Details

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant’s gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or \$2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is \$125,000.

Applying for Assistance

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and

2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/pathh for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means. To find a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator. They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

As USDA looks to long-term solutions to build back a better food system, the Department is committed to delivering financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions. Since USDA rolled out the [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative in March, the Department has announced over \$7 billion in assistance to producers and agriculture entities. For more details, please visit www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

PROMOTING VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM CAN HELP POWER POST-COVID-19 ECONOMY

*By Rep. Brad Schneider (D-Ill.), Opinion Contributor —The Views Expressed By Contributors
Are Their Own And Not The View Of The Hill*

After weathering an unprecedented global pandemic, we are at last seeing life return to somewhat normal. Thanks to the work of the American Rescue Plan, the U.S. has vaccinated more than 153 million people in President Biden's first 150 days and put our economy back on a path to recovery. Businesses are opening up, jobless claims are at their lowest since the pandemic started, and our kids are enjoying summer and anticipating returning to their classes full time next month.

America's small business success is critical for our recovery. Nearly half of all Americans either own or are employed by a small business, and small businesses generate 44 percent of our economic activity annually. For countless American small businesses, the emergency relief that my colleagues and I passed over the past year and a half has been a lifeline. Despite the relief provided, however, many small businesses have still been forced to permanently closed their doors, with many others struggling to hang on. My colleagues and I have fought hard in Congress to keep small businesses afloat. In 2020, we passed the CARES Act, which included many provisions to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19. Congress funded two major federal programs to help businesses weather the crisis: the Economic Impact Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, an existing program granting emergency loans to businesses, and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a new program providing funding for businesses to pay their employees. Congress provided additional funding for these programs at the end of 2020. This winter, we passed the historic American Rescue Plan, which created additional programs for small businesses, and was signed into law on March 12, 2021.

More work remains to help the small business that are the heart and soul of our neighborhoods, towns and villages. One of best things we can do to help these communities is to promote entrepreneurship, unleashing the America ingenuity that will power our nation into the post-covid, twenty-first century global economy. We need to create new and diverse pathways for Americans of all stripes, from all areas of the country, to cultivate their passions and learn the skills to create this new economy.



Veterans Entrepreneurship Program

We will find these entrepreneurs in many places — in industry, in our schools, and in particular in our military. Every year thousands of men and women who have completed active duty service to our nation make the transition of civilian life. These people have gained extraordinary skills and experience, including from leadership, planning, problem solving, and adapting to constantly changing situations. Providing just a small investment in business training has demonstrably cultivated many successfully veteran entrepreneurs. More than 50,000 veterans and their spouses have participated in what is known as Boots to Business since the program launched in 2013.

That's why I am proud to introduce the Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2021. This bill would formally codify into law the already successful Boots to Business program, and continue to provide returning service members with entrepreneurial training to start their own businesses.

The Boots to Business program offers exiting servicemembers a two-part training course on business ownership. As part of Boots to Business, servicemembers and their spouses take a two-day, in-person course followed by an eight-week, more in-depth online course. Boots to Business teaches veterans tangible skills they need to successfully launch a business, from how to research the market to funding their business.

The Boots to Business program is a bipartisan effort that I have championed for almost a decade. Over the years, I've heard from many servicemembers-turned-small business owners

who have directly benefited from the training provided in the Boots to Business Program. With so many communities seeking to replace the businesses that didn't survive the pandemic, this program is now more important than ever.

I hope my colleagues in Congress will see as much value in these programs as I do. We have a long way to go in recovering from this crisis, but

I'm proud of the work we have done so far and I know that we aren't giving up the fight. Our small businesses deserve our undying support.

Schneider represents the 10th District of Illinois and is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Small Business

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the Committee on Small Businesses hearing on "Strengthening the Cybersecurity posture of America's Small Business Community". The purpose of the meeting was to hold a hearing that focused on small businesses and how they are highly vulnerable to cybersecurity threats as employers, suppliers, and consumers in a modern digital economy. As technology advances and the workplace shifts online, cybersecurity is one of the most valuable things a small business can have to protect itself. This hearing discussed how the federal government can support small business through partnerships and policies. Some Issues discussed were:

- Small businesses do not have the resources to invest in cyber defense
- Build security protocols to protect supply chain
- H.R.2331 SBA Cyber Awareness Act
- H.R.1648 Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act of 2019



CAREER FAIRS

Job Fair

July 28, 2021

11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. EDT

IN-PERSON HIRING EVENT: TAMPA VETERANS JOB FAIR

A RecruitMilitary Job Fair is an event where job seekers with military experience can meet with recruiters from local and national companies. These events are free for U.S veterans, military spouses, transitioning military, and members of the Guard and Reserve.

Presented by [Recruit Military](#)

[More information](#)

Virtual Job Fair

July 29, 2021

1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. ET

VIRTUAL HIRING EVENT: TRANSPORTATION, SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS

Military community job seekers from around the globe will meet, network, and interview with transportation supply chain and logistics industry employers at this interactive virtual hiring event.

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[More information](#)

Job Fair

July 29, 2021

11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. EDT

IN-PERSON HIRING EVENT: NORFOLK VETERANS JOB FAIR

A RecruitMilitary Job Fair is an event where job seekers with military experience can meet with recruiters from local and national companies. These events are free for U.S veterans, military spouses, transitioning military, and members of the Guard and Reserve.

Presented by [Recruit Military](#)

[More information](#)

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

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



SMALL BUSINESS

H.R. 2082 - VA Supply Chain Resiliency Act: This bill would make certain improvements relating to the supply chain of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Status: 5/4/2021 - Voted 22 - 6 by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

[Resolution No. 55: Mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program](#)

H.R. 4515: This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors.

Status: 7/19/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Small Business

Resolution: *Pending Draft Resolution*

H.R.1687 - Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2021: This bill requires the Small Business Administration to establish a program for certifying at least 5 or 10% of the total number of employees of a small business development center to provide cybersecurity planning assistance to small businesses.

Status: 5/18/2021 – Introduced in the Senate

Resolution: *Pending Draft Resolution*

EDUCATION

S. 1480 - Recognizing Military Service in PSLF Act: This bill would allow service members who pause their student loan payments while deployed or on extended active duty orders to count that period of time toward their PSLF progress – which is currently not allowed.

Status: 4/29/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

[Resolution No. 101: Support for Continuation of Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#)

H.R. 1836 - Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021: This bill would expand eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill to count every day that a servicemember is paid and in uniform toward benefit eligibility in order to achieve GI Bill parity for National Guard and Reserve members.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)

S. 1607 - Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021: This bill would improve veterans' access to information about higher education and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore benefits that veterans use at schools subject to civil enforcement.

Status: 05/13/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 327: Support further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices](#)

H.R. 2587 - SERVE Act: This bill would improve the ability of veterans with medical training to assist the United States in response to national emergencies by implementing programs to certify and credential veterans.

Status: 4/15/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses](#)

H.R. 3586 - Veteran Education Empowerment Act: This bill would reauthorize and improve a grant program to assist institutions of higher education in establishing, maintaining, improving, and operating Student Veteran Centers

Status: 5/28/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor

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

H.R. 2327 - This bill would eliminate the time period for eligibility under Survivors' And Dependents' Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs

Status: 4/28/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

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

H.R. 4233 - Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act: This bill would award grants to community-based Veteran Centers to provide counseling and mental health services to veterans using VA higher education benefits.

Status: 6/29/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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

EMPLOYMENT

S. 94 - Hire Student Veterans Act: This bill allows a work opportunity tax credit for hiring a veteran attending an educational institution using educational assistance provided under certain programs administered by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Status: 1/28/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Finance

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

HOUSING

H.R.492 - Supporting Veteran Families in Need Act: To amend title 38, United States Code, make permanent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' authority to provide financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

[Resolution No. 331: Support Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

S. 1838 - Building Credit Access for Veterans Act of 2021: This bill expands access to housing for veterans and current servicemembers by establishing a pilot program using alternative credit scoring information for veterans and service member.

Status: 5/26/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

H.R. 711 - West Los Angeles VA Campus Improvement Act of 2021: This legislation would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) West Los Angeles Medical Center campus to use revenues from leases and easements as a dedicated funding source to build additional housing for homeless veterans, offset the high costs of housing construction, and help fund the provision of supportive services for veterans in the community.

Status: 6/23/2021 - Became Public Law No: 117-18

Support: 4/21/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

H.R. 2190 - Helping Homeless Veterans Act of 2021: This bill permanently establishes existing programs that assist homeless veterans and other veterans with special needs.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

S. 2172 - Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act: This bill improves grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans.

Status: 6/23/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Support: 6/23/2021 - This bill was submitted for testimony

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

ACE: American Council on Education

ACP: American Corporate Partners, a veteran's support organization

ATLAS: Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative

BLS: Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics

C&P: V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam

CAVC: Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
CCME: Council of College and Military Educators
COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment
CSAAVE: California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education
DIMO: Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations
DOD: Department of Defense
DOL-VETS: Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services
EdCounsel: Higher education consulting firm
EIDL program. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans
EIDL: Economic Injury Disaster Loan
GAO: Government Accountability Office
GPD: V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans
GWB: George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group
HEROES ACT of 2003: Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency.
HVAC: House Veterans Affairs Committee
MCAI: American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative
MSLP: The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program
MSO: Military Support Organization
NAICU: National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
NASAA: National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
NAVPA: National Association of Veterans Program Administrators
NCA: V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration
NDAA: National Defense Authorization Act
NLD: American Legion's National Legislative Division
OPM: Office of Personnel Management
PPP: Paycheck Protection Program
RBS: Risk-Based Survey Model
RPIC: Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge
S2S: Service to School, a veteran's organization
SAA: State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
SBA: Small Business Administration
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical
SVA: Student Veterans of America, a veteran's organization
SVAC Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
TAPS: Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families
TEAM Act: Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits
TFA: American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
USDA: United States Department of Agriculture
USERRA: Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
VA&R: American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division
VACO: Veterans Affairs Central Office
VBA: V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration
VE&E: Veterans Employment and Education Division
VES: Veterans Education Success, a veteran's organization
VSO: Veterans Service Organization



THE AMERICAN LEGION

VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA



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We are on the Web:

- <https://www.legion.org/>

VE&E Publications:

- https://www.legion.org/publication/s#veterans_employment_&_education

VE&E Awards:

- <https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>

Resources:

- **Veteran Career/Employment Center:**
 - <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmsec=1>
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/resources>
- **Homeless Veterans Find Help:**
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/homelesstaskforce>
 - <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans/resources>
- **Veterans Education Benefits:**
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits>
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/federalbenefits>