

The Weekly Report

August 20, 2021

The latest news, views, and announcements

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National Veterans Employment & Education Division



VE&E's Latest News Story See What's New Today:

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) Air National Guard event on Saturday, August 13, 2021 in Crystal City, Virginia.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a DoD-wide effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. The American Legion Post 290 from Stafford Virginia provided five members to serve as the Honor Guard during the opening ceremony. As a resource, The VE&E connected with participants and signed twelve to become Legionnaires.





*Half of States are Ending Pandemic Jobless Aid Early,
And The Economy Could Suffer*

CUTTING OFF JOBLESS BENEFITS EARLY MAY HAVE HURT STATE ECONOMIES

When states began cutting off federal unemployment benefits this summer, their governors argued that the move would push people to return to work.

New research suggests that ending the benefits did indeed lead some people to get jobs, but that far more people did not, leaving them — and perhaps also their states' economies — worse off.

A total of 26 states, all but one with Republican governors, have moved to end the expanded unemployment benefits that have been in place since the pandemic began. Many business owners blame the benefits for discouraging people from returning to work, while supporters argue they have provided a

lifeline to people who lost jobs in the pandemic.

The extra benefits are set to expire nationwide next month, although President Biden on Thursday encouraged states with high unemployment rates to use separate federal funds to continue the programs.

To study the policies' effect, a team of economists used data from Earnin, a financial services company, to review anonymized banking records from more than 18,000 low-income workers who were receiving unemployment benefits in late April.

The researchers found that ending the benefits did have an effect on employment: In states that cut off benefits, about 26 percent of people in the study were working in early August, compared with about 22 percent of people in states that continued the benefits.

But far more people did not find jobs. In the 19 states ending the programs for which researchers had data, about two million people lost their benefits entirely, and a million had their payments reduced. Of those, only about 145,000 people found jobs because of the cutoff. (The researchers argue the true number is probably even lower, because the workers they were studying were the people most likely to be severely affected by the loss of income, and therefore may not have been representative of everyone receiving benefits.)

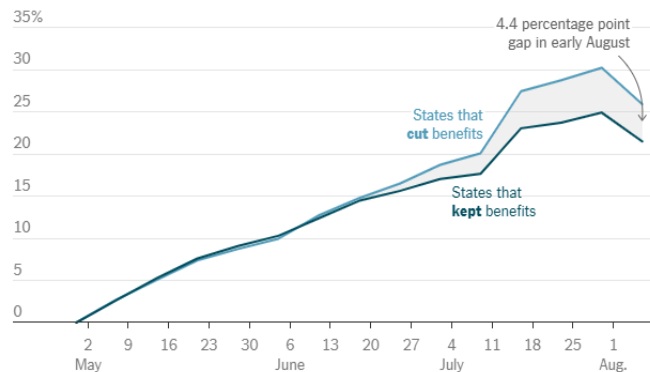
Cutting off the benefits left unemployed workers worse off on average. The researchers estimate that workers lost an average of \$278 a week in benefits because of the change, and gained just \$14 a week in earnings (not \$14 an hour, as previously reported here). They compensated by cutting spending by \$145 a week — a roughly 20 percent reduction — and thus put less money into their local economies.

“The labor market didn’t pop after you kicked these people off,” said Michael Steiner, a University of Toronto economist who was one of the study’s authors. “Most of these people are not finding jobs, and it’s going to take them a long time to get their earnings back.”

The findings are consistent with other recent research that has found that the extra unemployment benefits have had a measurable but small effect on the number of people working and looking for work. The next piece of evidence will come Friday morning, when the Labor Department will release state-level data on employment in July.

A Small Rise in Employment

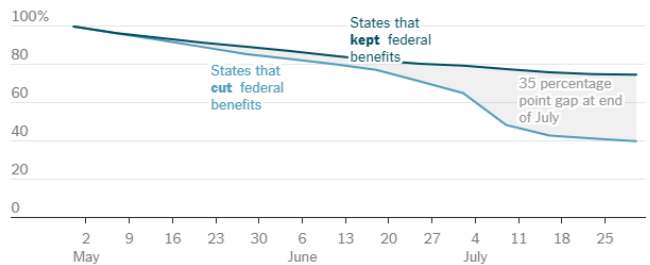
Share of workers on unemployment in late April who later began working.



Note: Chart reflects data in 19 states that have cut off benefits, and 23 that have retained them.
 Source: Earnin via Coombs, et al. By The New York Times

A Big Drop in Benefits

Share of workers on unemployment in late April who continued to receive benefits in some form.



Note: Chart reflects data in 19 states that have cut off benefits, and 23 that have retained them.
 Source: Earnin via Coombs, et al. By The New York Times

PRESIDENT BIDEN ENCOURAGES SOME STATES TO FURTHER EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

President Biden is encouraging states with stubbornly high jobless rates to use federal aid dollars to extend benefits for unemployed workers after they are set to expire in early September, administration officials said on Thursday, in an effort to cushion a potential shock

to some local economies as the Delta variant of the coronavirus rattles the country.

Enhanced benefits for unemployed workers will run through Sept. 6 under the \$1.9 trillion economic aid bill enacted in March. Those benefits include a \$300 weekly supplement for

traditional benefits paid by states, additional weeks of benefits for the long-term unemployed and a special pandemic program meant to help so-called gig-economy workers who do not qualify for normal unemployment benefits. Those benefits are administered by states but paid for by the federal government. The bill also included \$350 billion in relief funds for state, local and tribal governments.

Mr. Biden still believes it is appropriate for the \$300 benefit to expire on schedule, as it was “always intended to be temporary,” the secretaries of the Treasury and labor said in a letter to Democratic committee chairmen in the House and Senate on Thursday. But they also reiterated that the stimulus bill allows states to use their relief funds to prolong other parts of the expanded benefits, like the additional weeks for the long-term unemployed, and they called on states to do so if their economies still need the help.

That group could include California, New York and Nevada, where unemployment rates remain well above the national average and governors have not moved to pare back benefits in response to concerns that they may be making it more difficult for businesses to hire.

“Even as the economy continues to recover and robust job growth continues, there are some states where it may make sense for unemployed

workers to continue receiving additional assistance for a longer period of time, allowing residents of those states more time to find a job in areas where unemployment remains high,” wrote Janet L. Yellen, the Treasury secretary, and Martin J. Walsh, the labor secretary. “The Delta variant may also pose short-term challenges to local economies and labor markets.”

The additional unemployment benefits have helped boost consumer spending in the recovery from recession, even as the labor market remains millions of jobs short of its prepandemic levels. But business owners and Republican lawmakers have blamed the \$300 supplement, in particular, for the difficulties that retailers, restaurants and other employers have faced in filling jobs this spring and summer.

Two dozen states, mostly led by Republicans, have moved to end at least some of the benefits before their expiration date.

In their letter to Congress, the administration officials said the Labor Department was announcing \$47 million in new grants meant to help displaced workers connect with good jobs. They also reiterated Mr. Biden’s call for Congress to include a long-term fix for problems with the unemployment system in a large spending bill that Democrats are trying to move as part of their multipart economic agenda.



President Biden still believes it is appropriate that the extra \$300 benefit to regular unemployment payments expires on schedule. (Photo: Stefani Reynolds for The New York Times)

FACT SHEET: THE AMERICAN JOBS PLAN SUPPORTS VETERANS

Create Quality Jobs for Veterans and their Spouses

Roughly 200,000 service members transition from military service each year, the majority of whom will enter the civilian labor force. Many veterans have experienced unemployment and other economic challenges due to the pandemic. President Biden believes all veterans and their

spouses deserve civilian lives of opportunity with education and jobs worthy of their skills and talents. As the veteran population grows increasingly diverse to include more women and veterans of color, addressing systemic racism and gender inequality will be particularly important.



EMPLOYMENT

AMERICA'S TOP UPSKILLING COMPANY OFFERS VETERANS FREE MANUFACTURING TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT

When companies like General Dynamics and government agencies like the FBI need good people with in-demand skills, they have at least one company on speed dial: ManpowerGroup.

Every day, ManpowerGroup puts an estimated 600,000 people in meaningful positions worldwide across a variety of industries and sectors. It does this by training people in the specific skills companies need so when they reach their job, they're fully capable of fulfilling that critical role.

ManpowerGroup and Rockwell Automation have been recruiting and training vets with technical skills since 2017. Now, ManpowerGroup is teaming with Military Hire and Operation: Job Ready Veterans to put its proven model to work for American veterans, free of charge and with a

job waiting for them at the end of the training program.

Ron Needham, ManpowerGroup's senior vice president of North American sales and marketing, served in the U.S. Army infantry between 1983 and 1985. When he left the military, Needham walked into a ManpowerGroup office while attending Penn State University. The company put him in a temporary job that turned out to be permanent.

He says the same perspective that helped him succeed in his first post-military job is one that veterans today still have.

"I discovered myself that the advantages I had in corporate America, like the discipline and the preparation to be a leader in a moment's notice,

were all transferable skills to the corporate world,” Needham told Military.com. “All these things you sort of learn that you don't necessarily translate to the business world at the moment, but really are right there. They're really powerful.”

When Needham went to work for ManpowerGroup years later, he looked at veteran employment and saw a need. There were others out there trying to address the problem, but he didn't see anyone doing it particularly well. He put ManpowerGroup to work for veterans and spouses.

The process is simple: The company's clients approach ManpowerGroup with a critical skills need and a demand for people. The company recruits veterans interested in joining that field and creates an upskilling program for that skill. If the veteran needs to train on equipment in person, ManpowerGroup covers the cost of relocation and housing. If the program is technology-based, veterans can take the training at home through its Academy of Advanced Manufacturing (AAM).

Once the training regimen is completed, the newly upskilled veteran takes their place in a job with the original company.

“Stakeholder capitalism is our core value here,” Needham says. “There are four constituents, and your employee is number one. If your employee feels engaged and likes working with your company, they take care of the second

constituent, the customer. If you take care of the customer, they will take care of your shareholders by doing more business with you. When the shareholder is taken care of, that gives us the right to invest in the community. The value in upskilling is taking care of the first of those four constituents.”

Veterans coming into ManpowerGroup's upskilling program can go to work for all kinds of companies in many different sectors. Rockwell Automation, General Dynamics and other long-standing and valuable companies, are just the beginning.

“Walk around and think about all the brands you're seeing, from the shoes on your feet to the trucks driving around,” Needham says. “You'd be amazed at the work we do that people don't know about. Those are all opportunities for our associates.”

To learn more about ManpowerGroup, the Academy of Advanced Manufacturing or to jump right in and apply, visit the AAM website. Classes begin regularly throughout the year.



(Academy of Advanced Manufacturing)

BIDEN TAPS OBAMA JUSTICE VETERAN FOR COMMERCE EXPORT-CONTROL JOB

President Joe Biden is nominating a Justice Department veteran from the Obama administration to oversee the enforcement of dual-use export controls at the Commerce Department as he seeks to limit China's access to cutting-edge technology.

Matthew Axelrod is Biden's pick for assistant secretary for export enforcement within the Bureau of Industry and Security, according to a

person familiar with his plans, who asked not to be named because they haven't yet been made public. Axelrod spent more than a decade at the Department of Justice, including time as the principal associate deputy attorney general, advising on top criminal and national-security issues.

Biden last month said that he was nominating Alan Estevez, a Deloitte LLP logistics consultant

and former Defense Department official, to lead the BIS, an agency that's a key player in the export controls arena. Both positions are subject to Senate confirmation.

The BIS is in charge of the so-called entity list. U.S. firms are required to obtain government licenses if they want to sell American tech and intellectual property to businesses on the list.

The Trump administration used export controls, prohibitions and executive orders to block companies including Huawei Technologies Co., chipmaker Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp., ByteDance Ltd.'s TikTok and Tencent Holdings Ltd. from American goods and consumers. Now, it's up to Biden whether to maintain, remove or deepen those measures.

¿Did You Know?



Fairstream provides access to free events, jobs, and other learning opportunities for all communities including our Veterans, military spouses, families, and friends. fairstream graphic

Register for a free Veteran Tech event scheduled for Aug. 26 from noon-4 p.m. Eastern time to receive information from employers, speakers, and resources! Veteran Tech connects Veterans, military spouses, and friends of the military to world class tech opportunities. Top employers that value your skills developed during service will fill roles in engineering, product, sales, marketing, customer success, and more at this event.

How Veteran organizations can use Fairstream:

Looking to take your virtual events to the next level? Fairstream offers their platform for free to Veteran communities. Communities like American Dream U and Claim Academy use Fairstream for webinars, career fairs, meetups and networking. The platform helps users handle registration, video conferencing, and

communication in one place for unlimited attendees, making it easy to host high quality events no matter the size.

How employers can participate:

Organizations looking for high caliber military talent for technical, sales, product, and marketing roles – can look no further.

Fairstream helps employers hire Veterans through virtual events. Connect with communities like American Dream U and Claim Academy in one place for events like Veteran Tech to take military hiring to the next level.

Interested in learning more about Veteran Tech 2021? Email skylar@thefirstream.com for more details.

Interested in learning more about hosting your next event on Fairstream? Email skylar@thefirstream.com.

The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on part of VA.

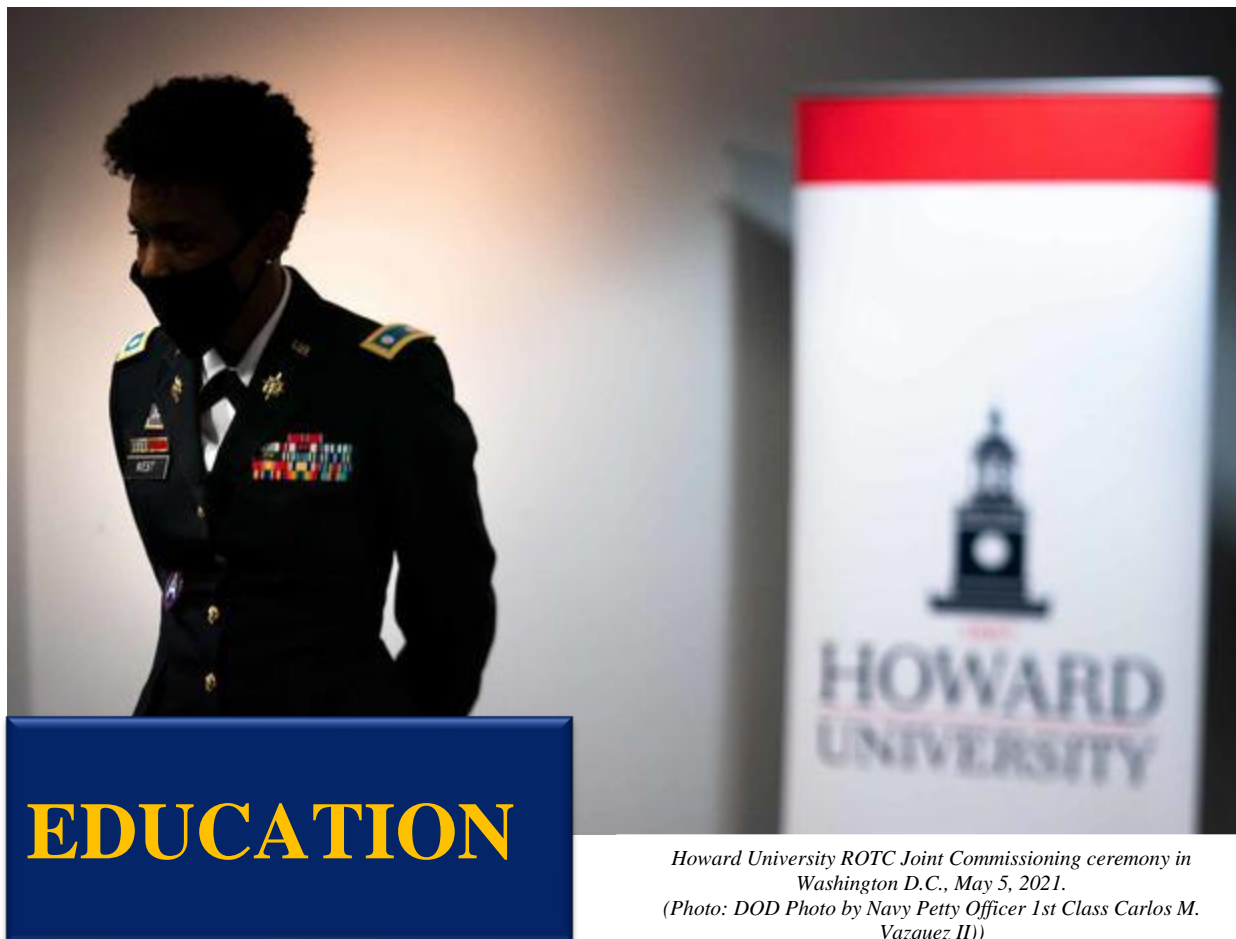
ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- 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



*Howard University ROTC Joint Commissioning ceremony in Washington D.C., May 5, 2021.
(Photo: DOD Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Carlos M. Vazquez II)*

HOWARD UNIVERSITY OFFERS LOANS TO STUDENT VETS IN LIMBO AFTER SCHOOL LOST GI BILL ELIGIBILITY

Howard University is offering student veterans a \$3,000 no-interest loan after a Military.com investigation revealed the school had lost its accreditation for new students to use GI Bill benefits to pay for their education. The investigation also uncovered a pattern of mishandled paperwork for veterans that has left some struggling to meet their expenses.

Students will be required to repay the loan by Dec. 14. Some blasted the school's loan program, saying they won't be able to pay it off if they don't get their GI Bill benefits, and noting the school's history of issues with helping veterans access those payments.

"If I wanted to live in debt, I would not [have] joined the military and gotten a student loan,"

Tiahna Pantovich, an Army veteran, told Military.com. "I can't imagine every swipe, every gas tank fill-up, every grocery store shop knowing I have a cloud over me to pay this back."

Pantovich said that she had not been contacted about the loan offer Howard University described to Military.com. Of the four student veterans who spoke to Military.com, two said they had been contacted and two said they had not.

In April, the District of Columbia's State Approving Agency, or SAA, revoked Howard University's ability to allow newly enrolled student veterans to use their GI Bill benefits. The decision took effect June 15, triggering a 60-day window that closed Sunday.

"As we anticipate that the interruption in receipt of veterans benefits for some students will be resolved shortly, the goal will be for students to repay the advance once stipends from the VA are again processed, and available by the end of the semester," Frank Tramble, a spokesman for Howard University, told Military.com.

Meanwhile, 57 student veterans signed a petition to the school's senior administrators urging Howard to do more than extend the loans -- such as waive tuition and fees for impacted students for the spring 2021, fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters.

"Many students are having to scramble for alternative options with no support from an institution that promises truth and service."

"As of August 17, 2021, only five days before the Fall 2021 semester begins, military students still do not know whether or not they will be able receive their education benefits, which includes a textbook stipend and a monthly housing allowance (in addition to covering tuition and fees), which dramatically affects the livelihood of these students," reads the petition, penned by Leana Mason, a Marine Corps veteran and Ph.D. candidate.

Instead of a loan they may not be able to pay back, the student veterans also are asking the school to compensate them through a grant or scholarship for cash they may miss out on if they don't receive their benefits.

They also are petitioning the school to hire a new veterans benefits liaison or to hire student veterans to support the processing of paperwork related to VA benefits.

It is unclear what led the D.C. SAA to revoke Howard's eligibility. Tramble told Military.com that it amounted to a paperwork snafu stemming from new rules on filing that the SAA did not tell the school about in time. Yet no other school in the D.C. area has lost its GI Bill credentials.

SAA's have authority delegated from the Department of Veterans Affairs to audit schools on their compliance with the law and whether the institution reaches certain minimums of quality. The goal is to ensure the GI Bill, one

of the most costly federal benefit programs, is not being wasted on fraudulent schools or institutions with weak credentials.

Taking away GI Bill credentials from a school displaces student veterans and cuts off a critical stream of financial support for their education.

SAA's usually reserve suspension for extreme cases. Harsh action against an otherwise prestigious school is also rare.

Classes at Howard begin Monday, and the D.C. SAA has not responded to multiple requests for comment from Military.com. The SAA does have the authority to broaden the suspension, including

blocking any veteran who previously had been eligible from using benefits at the school and making the suspension permanent. When multiple employees who played a role in the filings tied to Howard's suspension were reached by phone, they said they were not authorized to speak to the press.

If Howard is not approved to accept GI Bill benefits in the next week, veteran students will lose out on stipends used for rent and books, leaving some to find a new school.

While the move impacts only new student veterans coming into Howard, Military.com spoke to several students who had their benefits paused or suspended after what they described as clerical errors by the school, such as misreporting their majors to the VA. In at least one case, a veteran was displaced from her home after losing out on her housing benefits, which in the D.C. area can amount to around \$2,000 per month.

"We have provided all requested information," Tramble told Military.com. "They [D.C. SAA] have not indicated that our status has not changed either way as they review and await approval from the VA."

ARE YOU DUE MONEY FROM VA? MORE THAN \$300M COULD BE OWED IN GI BILL REFUNDS

In a notice recently sent to schools, the Department of Veterans Affairs is looking for more than 115,000 veterans who may be owed refunds of up to \$2,700 for their GI Bill contributions. That means more than \$300 million belonging to veterans could currently be unclaimed.

The Veterans' Educational Assistance Program, or VEAP, was a precursor to the Montgomery GI Bill and was available to active-duty military members who served from Jan. 1, 1977, through June 30, 1985.

The VEAP program required participants to contribute up to \$2,700 of their own money to the program, which the government then would match with \$2 for every \$1 a service member contributed.

[Details on the VEAP program.](#)

However, veterans who participated in the VEAP program and used only a portion of their GI Bill - or who didn't use it at all -- may be due a refund of their original \$2,700 contribution or of the unused portion of it. Since the VEAP program closed to new participants in 1985, the VA may be attempting to close out the program, which hasn't paid out any benefits in a number of years. The VA is trying to locate veterans who may be eligible for the refunds. The next-of-kin also may receive the refund if the veteran is no longer living. The letter notifying schools of the refunds was posted to social media.

Veterans who believe they may be eligible for a refund of their VEAP contributions should contact the GI Bill hotline at 888-442-4551 Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central time. Veterans living overseas should call 001-918-781-5678 for assistance. There is no deadline for claiming the unused funds.

Vets also may contact the VA online via [GI Bill Help Portal](#) for assistance.

Keep Up With Your Education Benefits

Whether you need a guide on how to use your GI Bill, want to take advantage of tuition assistance and scholarships, or get the lowdown on education benefits available for your family, Military.com can help. Subscribe to Military.com to have education tips and benefits updates delivered directly to your inbox.



Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency
@MIVeteran



Attention Vietnam-Era Veterans: The @DeptVetAffairs has determined approximately 115,000 veterans may be eligible for a refund of their unused Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) contributions. Please review the guide below for more information:

VA has informed us that approximately 115,000 Post-Vietnam Era Veterans are entitled to a refund of contributions they made to the Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP). If you don't know, VEAP was a service member education and training savings program for Post-Vietnam Era Veterans.

Why are some service members owed refunds?

In general, Veterans have ten years from their date of discharge to use their education benefits. Some ineligible Veterans still have unused contributions and are entitled to a refund.

Who might be missing their refund?

Veterans potentially eligible for a refund would have:

- Entered Active Duty between 01/01/77 to 06/30/85
- Contributed to VEAP while on active duty and before 4/01/87
- Not used all their contributions
- Not have been dishonorably discharged
- Completed 24 months of continuous service or have been discharged early due to:
 - Convenience of the government within three months of the end of their enlistment (an "early out" under Title 10, Section 1171)
 - Hardship (under Title 10, Section 1173)
 - Service-connected disability (this includes those rated for a compensable service-connected disability even if they were not discharged for that disability)

What should an eligible, or potentially eligible, Veteran do?

If you have unused VEAP funds, you should submit [VA Form 22-5281](#) after completing sections 1-6, 14, 15, and 18. It will take 3-4 weeks to receive a response and/or refund via U.S. Treasury check.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible for a refund or whether you participated in VEAP, you can call the Education Call Center at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442 4551) domestically or 001-918-781-5678 overseas, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. CT.



HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

HOMELESS PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAMS BREAK BARRIERS FOR VETERANS FACING HOMELESSNESS

Every Veteran across the country should have quick and easy access to primary health care. In reality, Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness are more likely to use emergency services for health-related issues. To reduce barriers that prevent these Veterans from accessing quality health care that meets their unique needs, VA created [Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams](#) (HPACTs).

HPACT is a multidisciplinary, population-based medical home model organized around the unique challenges faced by Veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Located at VA medical centers, community-based outpatient clinics, and Community Resource and Referral Centers across the country, HPACT programs were established to

create coordinated services to meet the unique needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness. These programs include interdisciplinary teams of doctors, nurses and case managers responding to the ongoing and evolving medical, mental health and substance use needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness entering the VA system focusing on the No Wrong Door approach.

Currently, there are 56 operational sites and 17,000 Veteran enrollees nationally.

“In 2008, I began working at VA as a registered nurse in the emergency department, where I came into contact with all types of patients with so many different medical, social and mental health needs,” said Dr. Jillian Weber, HPACT national program manager. “Through HPACT, the goal is

to both increase access to care and engagement in care for Veterans experiencing homelessness; however, we may only see the Veteran once. So, we work to make the most out of our time and focus on those high-priority needs.”

Why HPACTs are critical

The HPACT model is critical to serving Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness because it accounts for limited mobility and chronic conditions that could make it difficult to access excellent health care. It also provides critical services that go beyond medical care. Since its launch in 2011, HPACT has served over 22,000 Veterans annually and received more social worker support than regular Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT), averaging 4.6 visits per year compared to 2.7 visits a year. The success of [HPACT](#) comes from its dedication to addressing the challenges unique to Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

HPACTs are composed of skilled health care professionals who understand the specific needs of Veterans facing homelessness. HPACTs constantly refine the care they provide through a performance-based model that analyzes real-time data and uses patient feedback to improve performance. The availability of HPACTs around the nation is critical to helping Veterans access the health care they have earned and deserve.

Care provided by HPACTs reduces the number of emergency department visits by Veterans. [A recent study](#) involving 3,543 Veterans showed a 19% reduction in emergency department use and a 34.7% reduction in hospitalizations following enrollment in an HPACT.

Patients who have received care at an HPACT consistently report positive experiences. [A medical care study](#) found that Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness were more likely to report a positive experience after

receiving care at an HPACT than after receiving care at a traditional primary care center. HPACT patients also received additional, non-medical care, such as social services.

Veterans enrolled in an HPACT can also obtain and maintain permanent housing 81.1 days faster than those not enrolled, which is a major factor in reducing emergency department visits and hospitalizations. In addition, Veterans enrolled in HPACT cost \$9,379 a year less to care for compared to Veterans experiencing homelessness that are enrolled in PACT, largely driven by fewer hospitalizations in VA and the community.

“It has been a privilege to work with such an amazing team and group of colleagues as the HPACT national program manager,” said Dr. Weber. “I am looking forward to being able to focus on a few new projects and upcoming health initiatives that will expand HPACT in the years to come.”

Through outreach, flexibility, and culturally sensitive care, HPACTs break down barriers to health care for Veterans facing homelessness. HPACTs are a necessary step to providing focused and tailored care for our nation’s Veterans.

More information

- To learn more about HPACT and its resources, visit the [HPACT website](#).
- Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).
- [Subscribe to the Homeless Programs Office newsletter](#) to receive monthly updates about programs and supportive services for Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.





SBA SEES BIDEN EXECUTIVE ORDERS AS OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE EQUITY IN SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTS

The Small Business Administration, as part of the Biden administration's diversity, equity and inclusion work, is stepping up to increase the percentage of federal contracting dollars that go to small, disadvantaged businesses.

President Joe Biden set that goal in June, directing federal agencies to increase contracting spending on small, disadvantaged businesses by 50% over the next five years.

"Just imagine if, instead of denying millions of entrepreneurs the ability to access capital and contracting, we made it possible to take their dreams to the marketplace to create jobs and invest in our communities," Biden said during a speech in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Bibi Hidalgo, the associate administrator of SBA's Office of Government Contracting and

Business Development, said her office is taking steps to ensure that agencies make the president's small business contracting goals a reality.

Hidalgo told Federal News Network in an exclusive interview that her office is working with the House and Senate small business committees to introduce legislation that would codify Biden's new contracting goals into law.

This pending legislation would, as Biden announced, set a target for 15% of federal contracting dollars to go to small, disadvantaged businesses — up from the current goal of 10%.

Hidalgo said the administration's goal to increase 8(a) small, disadvantaged business participation in the federal marketplace is one of the main reasons she accepted her role in the Biden administration.

As a senior White House policy adviser during the Obama administration, Hidalgo previously led a team of 70 staff across 20 federal agencies to develop a strategic framework for increasing small, minority, women-owned and veteran business reporting. She also developed a policy proposal for performance-based contracting measures 11 agencies adopted.

“To be able to come back around 10 years later and figure out ways that we can not only increase this goal but ensure that we’re reaching more of the presumed disadvantaged groups within 8(a) in a meaningful way is really significant,” Hidalgo said.

The administration’s focus on diversifying the federal marketplace comes as the Office of Management and Budget rethinks how the federal government, as the country’s largest employer and buyer of goods, measures public access to its services among certain demographics, and how agencies can include populations that may not benefit equally from their programs.

From a governmentwide view, agencies already surpass goals set by SBA’s [small business procurement scorecard](#). Federal spending on small business contracts. Agencies spent more than \$145 billion on contracts to small businesses in fiscal 2020. That’s more than 26% of all federal contracting spending, and exceeds a small business contracting goal of 23%.

Agencies, however, fell short on prime contracting goals for women-owned small businesses and HUBZone small businesses. And despite the increase in overall small business contract spending, the number of small businesses that receive government contracts is decreasing.

Hidalgo said she’s encouraged to see that 8(a) small business applications are now increasing significantly, an inflection point in what she said has been a steady decline in the number of 8(a) firms in recent years. However, she said the current level of 8 (a) small business participation in the federal marketplace doesn’t match levels

from 10 years ago, when as many as 140,000 small businesses contracted with agencies.

“We want to get back to those historic levels. We realize it needs to be dispersed as well across the country, not just concentrated in certain geographic areas,” Hidalgo said.

To tackle this issue, SBA is holding regular strategy meetings with the White House’s Domestic Policy Council and OMB’s Deputy Director for Management Jason Miller to study options to increase small business diversity.

Hidalgo said talks between SBA and OMB staff in recent months have been focused around category management reform and ensuring the federal government’s 3,000 buying offices adhere to a “rule of two,” which directs agencies to set aside awards for small businesses if two or more small business can perform the work at a reasonable price.

While category management streamlines contracts within the federal government, she said it also has the inadvertent impact of making it more difficult for small businesses to compete for federal contracts.

While agencies failed to meet governmentwide women-owned and HUBZone small business contracting goals, Hidalgo said SBA is looking to improve past business participation through Biden’s recent “Buy American” and supply chain security executive orders.

Biden, in a July 28 speech focused on American manufacturing in Macungie, Pennsylvania, announced that SBA is standing up a new manufacturing contracting office to help small and medium-sized businesses bid on government contracts, while the Commerce Department is helping agencies connect with domestic suppliers in every state.

Biden said SBA’s office would help ensure a greater share of the nearly \$600 billion agencies spend every year on goods and services would go toward companies with less experience in the federal marketplace.

“If American companies know that we’re going to be buying from them, they’re going to be more inclined to hire and make key investments in the future in their companies,” Biden said.

Hidalgo said Biden’s speech helped shine a spotlight on what her office had been working on for months.

“We were told that when he realized we were creating a manufacturing hub within our Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, he said, ‘I want to be able to talk about that. That’s something that’s really important for small businesses to hear,’” she said, adding that the program should help increase contract spending that goes to HUBZone businesses.

SBA, meanwhile, is also taking over the responsibility to certify veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses from the Veterans Affairs Department, starting in 2023.

As part of this transfer, mandated in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, SBA will

start certifying small, disabled veteran-owned firms, which until this point have been self-certified through the VA.

To ensure the success of this transfer, SBA’s government contracting team is working with VA’s Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). Hidalgo said she also recently met with VA Secretary Dennis McDonough to ensure a seamless transfer and that SBA meets the needs of the veteran community

“We have a timeline for how we want to integrate the systems, and also for testing it out well beforehand. We want to make sure all of that is really well in place before we need to launch in 2023,” Hidalgo said.

The American Legion commends the Small Business Administration increasing funding for disadvantaged groups to include Veterans Business Development initiatives, which aligns with **Resolution No. 153: Support Effort of the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Veterans Business Development.**

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS’ (VA) CENTER FOR VERIFICATION AND EVALUATION (CVE) TRANSFER TO THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

Previously, veteran-owned small businesses interested in being certified by the Federal Government received their certification through the VA. In order to streamline this process with all other small business certification programs, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2021 officially requested that CVE’s responsibilities be transferred to the SBA by January 1, 2023.

Program Purpose

The CVE program plays an essential role in creating opportunity for veteran-owned small businesses across the country. It ensures that

veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB) can compete for set-aside and sole source contracts through the VA. Eligible VOSBs and SDVOSBs must be verified before they can participate in the program.

Scope of CVE Transfer

- **Transferring CVE responsibility to the SBA makes sense** because the SBA already manages all other government-wide socioeconomic programs for VOSBs and SDVOSBs. The transfer will help eliminate any confusion and redundancy in the roles between the VA

and the SBA, providing VOSBs and SDVOSBs with a one-stop shop for their small business certification and contracting needs.

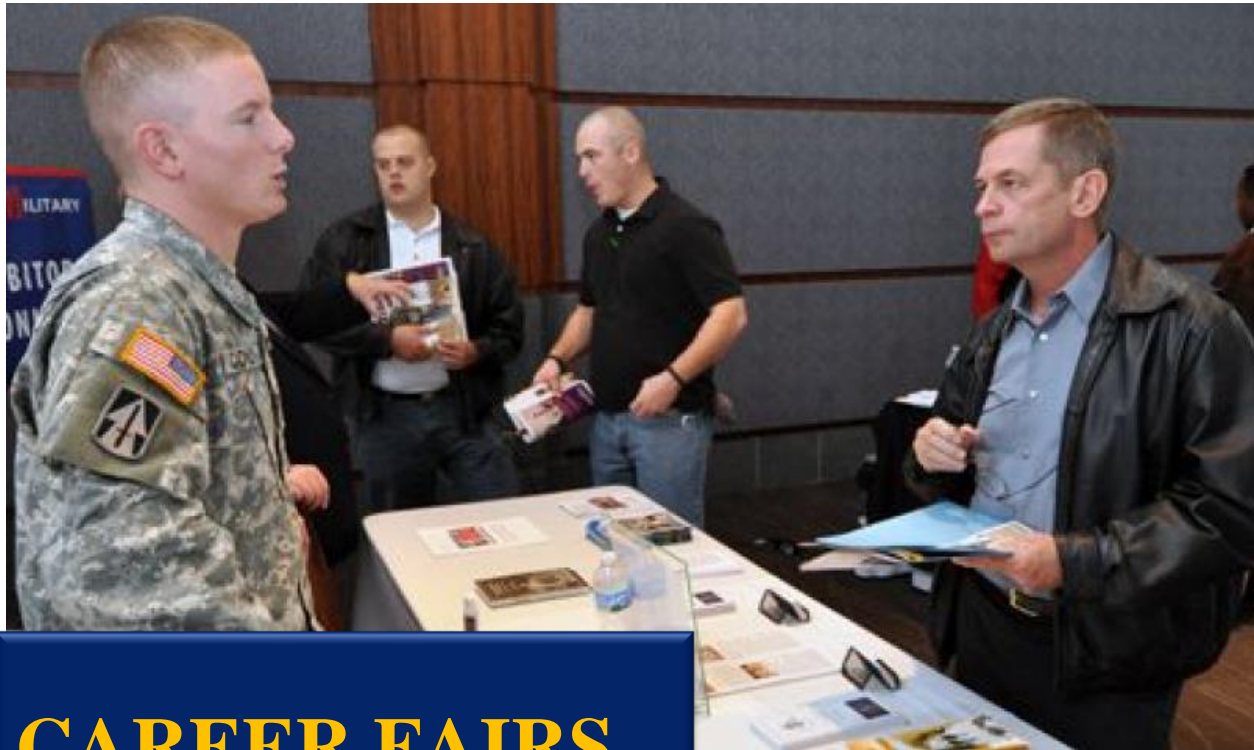
- Because of this transition, veterans who own and operate **small businesses will be able to benefit further from the full complement of services that SBA has to offer** within its field offices and its Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, including its Mentor-Protégé Program, small business training series, and other programs meant to aid small businesses.
- **VOSBs or SDVOSBs** previously verified by the VA, will not lose their status at the time of program transfer.
- **Self-certified SDVOSBs** will now be required to apply for SBA verification. Starting January 1, 2023, there will be a **one-year grace period** to apply with the SBA.
- During the grace period, the company can continue to use its self-certification **for non-VA contracts** until an SBA determination is made.

Next Steps

- There is **no immediate action required** for veteran small business owners at this time.
- The VA and the SBA are committed to being transparent and providing a seamless transition with minimal impact to veteran small business participants.

- Both agencies will keep all stakeholders, including VOSBs and SDVOSBs, updated on the new CVE processes.
- Regular briefings will be provided to VA and SBA leadership throughout the transition process.
- Additional guidance for self-certified SDVOSBs will be provided.

Please email questions to cvetransfer@sba.gov.



CAREER FAIRS

Lexington Park, MD

August 24, 2021, 3pm - 7pm

Bay District Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall
46900 S. Shangri-La Drive
Lexington Park, MD 20653

PATUXENT RIVER JOB FAIR

3-5pm ET

In-person, reserved for veterans, military and family members and/or security clearances.

5-7pm ET

In-person, open to all job seekers.

4-7pm ET

Virtual.

Presented by [JobZone](#)

[More information](#)

Virtual Job Fair

August 26, 2021, 1pm - 3pm

VIRTUAL HIRING EVENT: HEALTHCARE

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

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)
[More information](#)

Joint Base Andrews, MD

August 26, 2021, 10am - 2pm

The Club at Andrews
1889 Arnold Avenue
Joint Base Andrews, MD 20762

CHIEFS GROUP MILITARY FRIENDLY JOB FAIR

Two free resume seminars will be available to all attendees anytime from 10am to 2pm.

Presented by [JobZone](#)
[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](#)

H.R. 4483 - Veterans and Servicemember Consumer Protection Act of 2021: This bill would establish a coordinator within the FTC to educate veterans, service members, and their families about various scams and deceptive practices targeting them.

Status: 07/19/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Resolution: Pending

H.R.447 - National Apprenticeship Act of 2021: To amend the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly referred to as the “National Apprenticeship Act”) and expand the national apprenticeship system to include apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeship registered under such Act, to promote the furtherance of labor standards necessary to safeguard the welfare of apprentices, and for other purposes.

Status: 02/25/2021 - Received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

H.R.3582 — This bill increases the work opportunity tax credit in 2021 for the hiring of certain disabled or unemployed veterans.

Status: 05/28/2021 – Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means

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

HOMELESSNESS & 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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 - <https://www.legion.org/>
- VE&E Publications:
 - [https://www.legion.org/publication/s#veterans employment & education](https://www.legion.org/publication/s#veterans%20employment%20&%20education)
- VE&E Awards:
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>

Resources:

- Veteran Career/Employment Center:
 - <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmscc=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>
- Veteran Small Business Funding Program:
 - <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs>

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ILLINOIS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER JOINS NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

“The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the Metro East at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is officially part of the Illinois Community Navigator Program through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).” [Continue reading the article](#)

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