

The Weekly Report

October 1st, 2021

The latest news, views, and announcements

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National Veterans Employment & Education Division



VE&E'S LATEST NEWS STORY

Chairman, Daniel Seehafer of the Veterans Employment and Education Commission and Director, Joseph Sharpe will be attending the Fall NEC Meetings this coming week; VE&E will be presenting 8 resolutions on Thursday, October 6th, 2021, for the National Executive Committee approval.



Daniel Seehafer will also be briefing the New Department Commanders on Tuesday, October 5th, 2021, on the Veterans Employment and Education Division.

James Fratolillo, Chairman of the Employment & Veterans Preference Committee Chairmen and Lloyd Woods, Chairman of the Veterans Employment & Education Commission Liaison Committee will be present.



U.S. ECONOMY IS EXPECTED TO PICK UP SPEED AFTER DELTA-DRIVEN DOWNTURN

Economists cut third-quarter growth estimates because of Covid-19 surge and supply constraints but expect recovery to regain momentum

The Delta variant of Covid-19 appeared to temper economic growth this summer, but economists expect the recovery from the pandemic to reaccelerate as the virus's toll eases.

In recent weeks, many economists lowered their forecasts for third-quarter economic growth in large part because consumers slowed spending on meals out, hotels, and airline tickets amid the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant. The Covid-19 surge also complicated office and school reopening's, turning what had been expected to be a September boom into a downturn.

One wild card is continued supply constraints—including product and worker shortages—that

have been more severe than many analysts anticipated, contributing to inflation and downgrades in growth expectations.

While constraints such as backups at U.S. ports and overseas manufacturing disruptions have persisted, the Federal Reserve and economists expect them to eventually ease.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell on Wednesday said that a recent spell of higher inflation might last longer than central bank officials had anticipated, but he repeated his expectation that the price surge should eventually fade.

“The current inflation spike is really a consequence of supply constraints meeting very

strong demand. And that is all associated with the reopening of the economy, which is a process that will have a beginning, middle, and an end,” Mr. Powell said during a moderated discussion hosted by the European Central Bank.

While many economists have lowered growth forecasts for the third-quarter, they have raised forecasts for next year, indicating that some spending and production have been delayed by the Delta surge, rather than lost to it and supply-chain disruptions.

Forecasting firm IHS Markit projected in late September that gross domestic product would grow at a 3.6% annual rate in the third quarter. That is less than half of the firm’s mid-July estimate for 7.8% growth in the third quarter, in part reflecting the spending dent from the Delta strain. The government will release its estimate of third-quarter U.S. gross domestic product on Oct. 28.

“I do think that this new strain has set off some alarm bells that weren’t ringing before July,” said Joel Prakken, chief U.S. economist at IHS Markit. “The recovery is on solid footing. But it’s just not as robust as what we saw in the first half of the year.”

There are early signs that the spending slowdown is bottoming out as Covid-19 cases decline. In the week ended Sept. 28, the number of diners seated at restaurants was down just 8% from the same period in 2019, a less severe decline than earlier in the month, data from reservations site OpenTable show.

U.S. hotel occupancy was at 63% for the week ending Sept. 18, the highest level since late August, data from STR, a global hospitality data and analytics company, show. Air travel has shown signs of recovery since hitting a recent trough in mid-September, according to Transportation Security Administration figures comparing passenger traffic with 2019.

Covid-19 cases are likely to continue falling, according to projections from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If they do, households could tap into a record \$142 trillion in

net worth and ramp up spending on in-person services, economists say. Consumer spending is the biggest driver of U.S. economic growth.

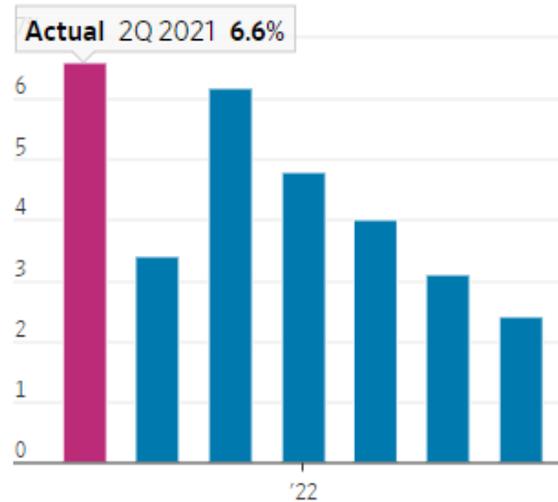
“The consumer is in great shape,” said Aneta Markowska, chief economist at Jefferies LLC. “They have the firepower, they have the ability to spend.”

Ms. Markowska added the holiday season could provide another impetus for spending. More people are likely to travel for family get-togethers than last year, when many stayed home amid rising coronavirus cases, she said. In one sign of robust holiday demand, there were five times as many internet searches related to December travel in August compared with a year earlier, according to digital analytics company Similarweb.

The Federal Reserve raised its 2022 growth forecast to 3.8% in its September projections released last week, up from 3.3% in June projections.

Real GDP growth rate, actual and forecast

■ Actual ■ Forecast



Note: Seasonally adjusted at annual rates
Source: Commerce Department (actual GDP), IHS Markit (forecasts as of early September)

Some economists expect growth to reaccelerate after the third quarter. This month, Allen Sinai,

chief global economist and strategist at Decision Economics, Inc., projected output would grow at a 6.5% annual rate in the fourth quarter and at a 5.1% rate in the first quarter of 2022, up from 4.2% in the third.

The economy looks like a coiled spring “that’s being held down in the third quarter by the worsening pandemic,” he said. “But six months from now, one way or the other, as we have seen in the past, we’ll be over that hump.”

Though the U.S. is vulnerable to the fast-changing pandemic and potential new variants, each wave of rising Covid cases appears to pose less of an economic threat.

The economic drag from the Delta variant was less severe than previous virus surges, many economists say. Most American adults are now vaccinated, helping consumers feel more at ease. Further, most businesses are operating without capacity restrictions.

Restaurant and hotel revenue at the 112-year-old Hotel Boulderado in Boulder, Colo., broke above pre-pandemic levels this summer and are now riding 5% to 10% higher than two years ago, said Creighton Smith, the hotel’s general manager. People eager to travel have been drawn to Boulder’s outdoorsy environment, he said.

“There was a lot of pent-up demand for travel for the summer and the fall,” Mr. Smith said.

Delta has triggered a slowdown in winter bookings for corporate meetings, Mr. Smith said. Still, the hotel no longer faces the same business restrictions and consumer fear of the virus that held back sales earlier in the pandemic.

“We’re looking forward to a good fall and, I think, an OK winter,” he said.

Companies in August reported a sharp increase in new orders for appliances, computers, transportation equipment and other durable goods. Businesses have struggled to meet demand for goods.

Semiconductor shortages could continue to crimp shoppers’ ability to buy cars and other goods well into next year. IHS Markit analysts lowered their estimates for 2022 vehicle production on the basis that supply-chain disruptions abroad would take time to resolve. For instance, in Malaysia, extended government lockdowns have squeezed the nation’s ability to supply semiconductors used in autos, the forecasting firm noted.

Still, spending on long-lasting goods fell over the summer after surging in March, according to the Commerce Department. Economists expect demand for goods will

cool in the coming months, allowing businesses time to restock inventories.

Housing permits, which have increased for two straight months, could offer an early signal that some material shortages are easing, Ms. Markowska of Jefferies said. The rise in building permits suggests homebuilders are able to get more production materials to launch projects, she said.

Labor shortages stand to improve in the coming months, helping businesses meet demand. More workers will likely return from the sidelines as school reopenings alleviate child-care burdens. The nationwide expiration of expanded unemployment benefits in September could pull some workers back into the workforce.

Increased vaccinations—including among children—could provide another labor-market boost. Some parents have stayed out of the labor force because of Covid outbreaks at schools and quarantining requirements, said Amy Crews



U.S. building permits have risen for two consecutive months in a possible sign that some material shortages are easing. (Photo: Mike Blake/Reuters)

Cutts, chief economist at AC Cutts & Associates LLC.

“If we can get these kids vaccinated, that stops a lot of the transmission that’s happening now that they’re back in schools,” she said.

Economists say vaccine requirements could spur some workers to quit, while drawing others back into the labor force.

Labor shortages helped drive up wages and salaries for private-sector workers by 3.6% in the second quarter from a year earlier, the fastest pace since 2002, according to Labor Department data. Economists expect the unemployment rate—which was 5.2% in August—will continue declining, putting continued pressure on wages.

Higher wages could offer more support for consumer spending, even though pay gains would be partially offset by elevated inflation.

The federal government also could deliver another round of spending that could nudge up growth, economists say. That includes a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill and a separate \$3.5 trillion budget bill that would expand access to healthcare, offer universal prekindergarten and reduce carbon emissions, among other measures.

Some economists say households are still flush with cash and harbor a lot of pent-up demand for services. Households have only spent about 25% of this year’s stimulus payments, according to an analysis of Household Pulse Survey data by Jefferies LLC.

CURIOUS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF A SHUTDOWN? JUST WAIT

One of the big differences between government and the private sector is the field of labor relations. In industry, it is usually disgruntled workers who go out on strike. Usually the shutdown is because of wages, benefits, working conditions or health and safety issues. The board of director of the company continues to be paid during the shutdown. Workers don’t get paid because they didn’t work.



In government it’s different! But you knew that.

In government, the board of directors (Congress and the White House) initiate and trigger the shutdown. The issues are almost always political in nature. Like the last one, from Dec. 22, 2018, until Jan. 25, 2019, where the sticking point was whether to fund building a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico. In that one, 800,000 feds were locked out of their offices. Many more contractors were also impacted by the shutdown. An equal number of feds were required to work during the shutdown. Neither the workers nor the locked-outers were paid until

weeks — in some cases months — after the shutdown was settled.

Also, and again you knew this, the gang that always starts the shutdown continues to get paid while other feds are making do on, well in some cases, nothing. Members of the House, Senate and the folks at the White House continue to perform what they consider work and continue to get paid on time. The rationale is that since they created the problem, they are best qualified to solve it.

If you missed the last shutdown, and the pending one is delayed, just wait... Your time will come.

While it’s a little late to advise people to have six months of emergency cash on hand, there are some things feds should know, and can do, to brace for the next lockout.

In addition to a problem with cash flow, a shutdown can create problems for about-to- retire feds. While the long predicted “retirement tidal wave” has yet to hit, the number of retirements is up and growing month by month. Unfortunately, the backlog on processing claims is also growing.

That means it can be months before a new retiree gets a full annuity check. During an extended shutdown — like the most recent '35 days over Christmas lockout' — many had to tap their TSP accounts early or for much more than they had planned.

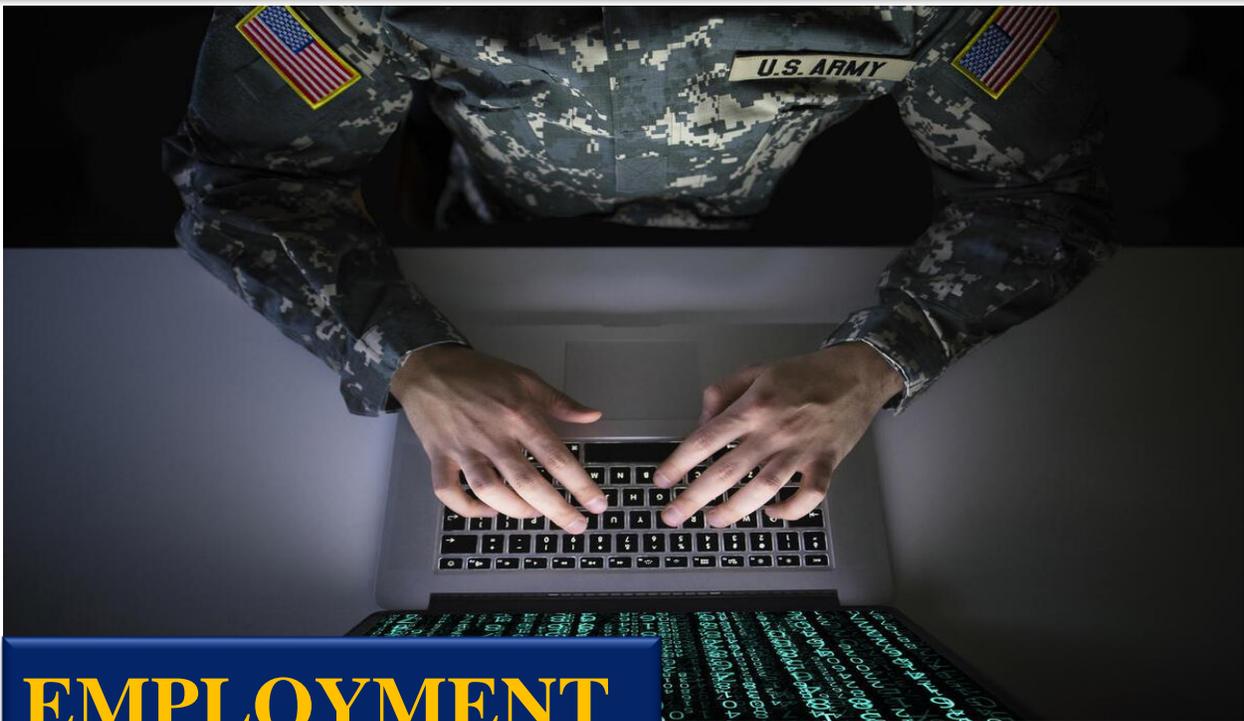
We asked a veteran of several shutdowns for his thoughts. This is some of what he said:

He also pointed out that “although we have historically been granted back pay, this time, back pays is guaranteed in the legislation enacted after the last record-long shutdown of 2018-19. For those who cannot rely on savings, I’m hoping that Feds Feeds Families can help them if a shutdown occurs. And for those approaching retirement, a shutdown will likely further extend the retirement processing backlog at the National Finance Center and OPM.”

Benefits expert Tammy Flanagan said a shutdown now or in December “would be a nightmare. It would add to the mess that retirements are already facing with the current processing delays. The good news is that an employee who is furloughed will still receive credit for the time on LWOP as long as it doesn’t exceed six months in a calendar year. Let’s hope that doesn’t happen, for a variety of reasons. The high 3-year salary average will still include the salary for the time spent on LWOP as well.”

Bottom line, if you are a fed and never experienced one, just wait. If not this week, there will be another shot at one in December. Or next year.

“I suspect a wide disparity in reactions based on the individual’s service time and GS pay level. Some are living hand-to-mouth and [during the last shutdown] had to visit soup kitchens. Those of us in the higher pay bands who also stayed out of debt could rely on savings or credit card float for short periods. Relying on credit cards for longer periods of time would get you into high interest rate trouble. Then there is also the adjustment from sirloin to recalling college days of Dinty Moore and English Muffin pizza.”



EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION

CYBERSECURITY, AI, AND 5G: TOP TECH FEATURES IN NEW DEFENSE SPENDING BILL

The House passed major defense funding legislation last week, and provisions related to cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, the digital workforce, and 5G wireless capabilities are the top tech-related amendments that made the bill.

The National Defense Authorization Act funds the Department of Defense's 2022 budget, and both parties voted Thursday to pass the bill and increase the budget by nearly \$25 billion, to roughly \$768 billion.

The bill's new policies and additional spending will fortify the U.S. military's technological advantage by ensuring the government has the tools to confront the growing threat of China and Russia, the House Armed Services Committee said in a statement last week.

Furthermore, the legislation includes "unprecedented levels of investment in emerging technologies, including AI, quantum computing, hypersonic, and autonomous systems," according to a summary of the bill by Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee.

One of the largest new tech-related areas of spending in the bill is nearly \$1 billion in additional cybersecurity investments in people, programs, and technologies to curb the rapid increase in ransomware attacks that have occurred recently.

The recent series of attacks on the computer systems of the federal government, the Colonial Pipeline, and the meat producer JBS have brought awareness to the need for increased cybersecurity protections within governments and businesses.

The bill would require the secretary of defense to update Congress on the state of cybersecurity within his agency, along with recommendations on how to help tackle the problem of cyberattacks. Another provision in the legislation would create a cyber counseling program for Small Business Development Centers.

A related provision in the bill would allow for a new cyber apprenticeship program between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency for members of the military and veterans to transition to civilian life through the cybersecurity training.

"We've already started talking about how we could implement apprenticeships at CISA," CISA Director Jen Easterly said at a Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee hearing last week.

"I think we need to be as creative as possible in all our approaches to deal with the deficit that we have across the country and then across the federal cyber workforce."

One of the popular amendments to the bill, supported on a bipartisan basis, would create a National Digital Reserve Corps, providing private-sector tech employees the ability to be a part of short-term initiatives for the federal government.

Another area of significant increased defense funding is artificial intelligence, or technology that leverages computers and machines to mimic the problem-solving and decision-making capabilities of humans.

The bill requires that artificial intelligence and digital readiness be incorporated into the Defense Department's platforms, processes, and

"This year's defense bill will ensure the United States remains the decisive leader in the technological revolution by developing and deploying emerging technologies to amplify our power and our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach U.S. soil," according to a summary of the bill by the House Armed Services Committee staff.

operations, in order to achieve a state of military AI readiness by 2025. The bill also requests that the heads of the military branches partake in skills



gap assessments to find any possible shortcomings when it comes to artificial intelligence, software development, and data science.

The bill also attempts to boost the U.S.'s capabilities and leadership with 5G wireless technology by pushing private companies to play a role in 5G expansion. It also creates a new pilot program to expedite 5G telecommunications on military facilities through the deployment of new telecom infrastructure.

Meanwhile, an amendment to the legislation that would create internet balloons for wireless communications abroad in affected areas, such as Cuba, did not make it into the bill. Amendments specifically targeting TikTok and its Chinese tech

giant owner ByteDance, to ensure it is banned from federally owned devices and should face sanctions, also did not make the final legislation.

The Defense-spending legislation will still need to pass the Senate in order to proceed, but this is expected to happen in the next few weeks, before going to President Joe Biden to be signed into law.

The American Legion is interested in a provision of the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act calling for a joint cyber apprenticeship program between the VA and CISA for service members and veterans. The idea of such a digital workforce initiative falls in line with **Resolution No. 20: National Cybersecurity Strategy** and **Resolution No 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers**, whereby The American Legion supports increased interagency programs and initiatives and offer a preponderance of critical sector apprenticeship opportunities respectively.

¿Did You Know?

RecruitMilitary, the country's leading company empowering veterans by connecting them with career opportunities, announced today its partnership with the US Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) to bring career resources and opportunities to transitioning military service members and their spouses through the inaugural Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot Initiative.

Through this newly formed partnership, RecruitMilitary and eight other non-government organizations will serve as resources for

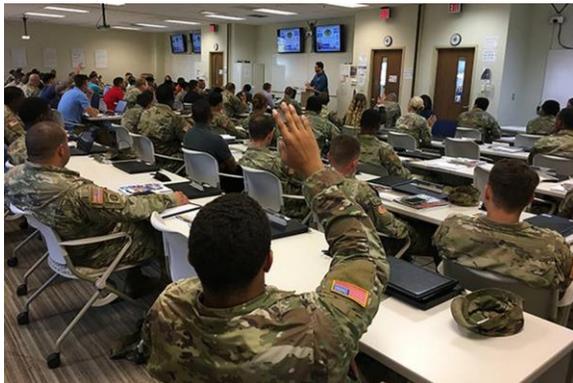
RECRUITMILITARY PARTNERS WITH US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO BRING EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND EXPERTISE TO TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS AND MILITARY SPOUSES

Employment Navigators who directly assist transitioning service members, and their spouses, one-on-one with employment related assistance, which include self-assessments, career exploration, identification of high-demand occupations and necessary credentials, and analyzing detailed local labor market information. Based upon an individual participant's needs, Employment Navigators then connect them with partner organizations that can provide additional employment-related services designed to facilitate their transition from the military.

RecruitMilitary provides a variety of pathways utilizing virtual and in-person capabilities for veterans to find great careers with competitive pay. The organization's partnership with US Department of Labor VETS program allows veterans to access a direct source of support at the onset and duration of the civilian career seeking and building journey.

"Our partnership with the Department of Labor's VETS program allows us to reach and support more transitioning military, veterans and military spouses than ever before," said RecruitMilitary CEO Tim Best, a former U.S. Army Special Operations attack helicopter pilot. "The inaugural Employment Navigator service synergizes our desire to directly impact the career seeking and building opportunities of military trained job seekers. We are grateful for the confidence that the US Department of Labor places in us and we look forward to working together to support veterans and their families."

"We are pleased that RecruitMilitary is participating in the Employment Navigator and Partnership Pilot Initiative," said Ivan Denton, Director, National Programs, US Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service. "Meaningful career opportunities are a



priority for transitioning service members and their families. With RecruitMilitary's support, we can meet many of the needs of these job seekers."

To learn more about resources available through US Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets>.

To learn more about RecruitMilitary's employment resources visit recruitmilitary.com.

About RecruitMilitary

RecruitMilitary, the nation's largest veteran recruiting firm, offers employers access to more than 1.6 million military job seekers via services that include contingency recruiting, as well as an online, mobile friendly job board, virtual and in-person career fairs and employer branding. RecruitMilitary's MBA Veterans Network is the nation's leading military and MBA diversity conference, connecting military veteran students from top MBA programs with employers. The ExecuVets subsidiary program connects employers with executive track veteran talent. To learn more about RecruitMilitary and its participating programs and partnerships, please visit recruitmilitary.com.

The American Legion, through **Resolution No.316: Support Employment of Veterans in the Public and Private Workforce**, commends the US DOL VETS partnering with RecruitMilitary via the Employment Navigator Partnership Program. The American Legion applauds the pilot program's intention to support veteran and transitioning servicemembers to acquire gainful employment and hopes to see beneficial metrics and effective results.

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Employment

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with U.S. Office of Personnel Management to receive updates on the OPM’s activities and concerns regarding Veterans Preference Hiring. Acting Program Director Cooper expressed worries about the consistent decrease in veteran hiring from 36% in 2016 to 25% in 2020. Accounting for the VA, DOD, and DHS as the leading adhering agencies, the amount diminishes to 5% among the rest of the agencies. The American Legion asked the OPM to reconvene for quarterly meetings and examine the current Biden administration's efforts and the acquisition of better metrics regarding the veteran community.

ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- The national unemployment rate is **5.2 percent (August 2021)**
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is **3.1 percent (August 2021)**
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is **2.1 percent (August 2021)**
- In August 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was **3.8%**. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was **5.2%** in August
- Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled **6,054** an increase of **67** 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	
	Aug. 2020	Aug. 2021	Aug. 2020	Aug. 2021	Aug. 2020	Aug. 2021
Unemployed	560	303	476	267	84	35
Unemployment rate	6.4	3.6	6.1	3.6	8.2	3.2



EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING

NAVY COLLEGE PROGRAM TO TRANSITION TO VIRTUAL SERVICES

The Navy College Program announced a complete transition to virtual education services for Sailors across the globe beginning Oct. 1, 2021. The transition will shift Sailor counseling from brick-and-mortar Navy College Offices (NCOs) to the Navy College Virtual Education Center (NCVEC) as the one-stop-shop for Sailors pursuing personal and professional development opportunities.

This virtual model proved successful in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic closed the doors on many OCONUS NCOs. Throughout 2020 and 2021, Sailors turned to the NCVEC for virtual education counseling and Tuition Assistance (TA) support. The NCVEC provides call-in and live chat with counselors during scheduled hours, and Sailors can use the automated Chatbot

function on the Navy College website or leave a question or request a counselor call them back using Issue Tracker in MyNavy Education.

“Sailors interested in pursuing off-duty educational opportunities will continue to have a wide array of virtual services available to them,” said Navy Voluntary Education (VOLED) Director Lt. Cmdr. Adam Walski. “More importantly, services will not be interrupted for those in need of education assistance or counseling in any location worldwide.”

The NCOs making the transition to virtual services include: Rota, Spain; Sigonella, Italy; Naples, Italy; Bahrain; Misawa, Japan; Yokosuka, Japan; Atsugi, Japan; Sasebo, Japan;

Okinawa, Japan; Guam; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Academic Institutions currently onboard Navy bases, CONUS and OCONUS, will remain in place and continue their current role in providing Sailors with quality education.

Commanders and education services officers can expect to receive the same level of customer service as any Sailor in the world from the Navy College Program. The TA and Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE) programs will not change, and all other assistance will be provided by the NCVEC when requested.

Concurrent with the transition to virtual services announcement, the Navy College Program announced an update to the NCVEC phone number. All NCVEC customers will now use the MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) toll-free number, 1-833-330-MNCC. The transition to the MNCC toll-free number supports the Chief of Navy Personnel's transformation efforts to provide a single source for all Navy human resources needs, and to provide a worldwide toll-free number for Sailors to have 24/7 access to VOLED services.

"We believe transitioning to the MNCC number will streamline the process for Sailors who are ready to take the next step in their education goals," said Walski. "Not only will it be part of a one-stop shop of other services including Navy COOL and USMAP, but it will be especially beneficial to our Sailors stationed outside the

continental US since they can call any time, at no cost to them."

After calling the toll-free number, Sailors needing educational services such as TA and NCPACE must select the option for "Training and Education," then "NCVEC".

For more information on the Navy College Program, visit the website at <https://www.navycollege.navy.mil>.

As part of the MyNavy HR Force Development team, NETPDC provides products and services that enable and enhance education, training, career development, and personnel advancement throughout the Navy. Primary elements of the command include the Voluntary Education Department, the Navy Advancement Center, and the Resources Management Department.

Access to educational resources and tools is critical to achieving personal, professional, and academic goals while serving in the military. The pandemic shifted many services online to protect service members, their families, and DOD civilians. Many of these changes have proven beneficial for servicemembers. By moving Navy College Offices (NCOs) online, servicemembers have more flexibility to seek counseling and Transition Assistance (TA). The American Legion welcomes this shift through **Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education.**

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Education

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division engaged with the Arnold Foundation regarding a grant awarded in 2020 to promote veterans' education and improve the oversight mechanisms employed by government entities and accreditation agencies to prevent the degradation of quality education provided to veterans. Although the pandemic has negatively impacted the division's ability to hold in-person events, VE&E is working diligently to publish a series of reports on veterans' higher education

online and oversight of veterans' higher education. The online education report outlines the history of distance learning for veterans from inception to modern times. It also details rules and regulations that hinder veterans from continuing their education. The oversight report highlights deficiencies in the current evaluation and approval processes for institutions of higher learning enrolling veterans while introducing a novel method for improving processes.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the 2021 Virginia Military and Veteran Education Summit. The summit provided an opportunity to listen to prominent state-level leaders in the veteran policy and advocacy field as well as veteran service officers regarding the status of higher education and how veterans and servicemembers can maximize their education experience. The overall theme centered on higher education, career exploration, and resources.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with the VA Education Service on the Risk-Based Survey Model with Deputy Director J. Ruhlman, Patrick Dworkowski, and Chris Southerland on for the VA, National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA), and EdCounsel RBS team. VA presented their concerns about the RBS model. NASAA needs funding from the VA to scale this model up to \$400,000, and we need to move forward with our support of this model so as to make the October 1, 2022 deadline for rolling this out nationally.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with the Veteran's Advisory Committee on Education Subcommittee on Distance Learning. We are working on three resolutions having to do with increased GI Bill housing allowance for distance education, updating VA regulations on same, and expressing support for Risk-Based Surveys.



[Service member benefits](#)

Find out what benefits you may be eligible for during service and which time-sensitive benefits to consider when separating or retiring.

[Family member benefits](#)

Learn about the benefits you may qualify for as a spouse, dependent, or survivor. And find out what you're eligible for as a family member caring for a Veteran with disabilities.

[Burials and memorials](#)

Get help planning a burial in a VA national cemetery, order a headstone or other memorial item to honor a Veteran's service, and apply for survivor and dependent benefits.

[Careers and employment](#)

Apply for vocational rehabilitation services, get support for your Veteran-owned small business, and access other career resources.

[Housing assistance](#)

Find out if you're eligible for a VA-backed home loan. If you have a service-connected disability, see if you qualify for a housing grant to help you live more independently.

[Pension](#)

Apply for monthly payments for wartime Veterans and survivors with limited or no income who meet certain age and disability requirements.

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

VHA NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTHCARE ADVANCEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS (HAP) AND THE VETERAN SPONSORSHIP PARTNERSHIP NETWORK (VSPN)

How Service members and Veterans Can Re-enter Civilian Life with Better Outcomes

Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a new initiative aimed at improving the experience and outcomes of service members transitioning back into civilian life.

Under the Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network (VSPN) initiative, VHA regional offices form non-monetary partnerships with community organizations to help transitioning service members and their families access VA services and community resources, such as employment opportunities, education benefits, housing assistance, and more.

The initiative also streamlines VHA partnerships with community organizations that can pair service members with peer sponsors[†] who can provide one-on-one support during the military-to-civilian transition, a resource similar to the military sponsorship program within the Department of Defense.

Many community partners have their own platform or website with information on community resources and can directly connect Service members, Veterans, and their families to resources in the local community Service members move to. Check out the websites of community partners in the VSPN (listed above) for more information about resources in the areas they serve. Some community partners also use the Expiration Term of Service (ETS) Sponsorship Program (ETS-SP) platform[§] to manage their sponsors and facilitate sponsor support for service members. VHA has a non-monetary partnership with ETS-SP to support service members, Veterans, and their families across all communities they transition to nationwide.

Service members and Veterans who are interested in getting a sponsor can learn more by visiting the ETS-SP website:

<https://etssponsorship.com/>

Check out the VSPN fact sheets for more details on how Service members, Veterans, sponsors, and community organizations can get engaged: <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/vspn.asp>

“We know that a Veteran’s first year out of the military is a critical time and that the risk for suicide during this period is increased by nearly 50%,” said nurse executive for VA’s National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships Tracy L. Weistreich, Ph.D., RN “The VSPN initiative supports an evidence-based approach and collaboration with community partners that helps VA meet its strategic priorities and deliver the support and services our Veterans deserve.”

Early research has shown that engaging in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) care with community-based interventions and sponsorship programs can help Veterans achieve better outcomes across social determinants of health, experience less difficulty when transitioning back into civilian communities, and reduce risk factors related to Veteran death by suicide.

The VSPN initiative falls under VA’s overall strategy to partner with regional and national organizations to assist transitioning service members with accessing VA health and benefit resources. Local, regional, and national organizations interested in partnering with VA should can contact the National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships by emailing communityengagement@va.gov.

HAP leads the VSPN initiative in collaboration with VA’s Transitioning Servicemember/Veteran And Suicide Prevention Center, VA regional offices, and a nationwide network of community partners.

The American Legion recognizes the need for improved processes and innovative methods for transitioning servicemembers and veterans who recently transitioned. The Veteran Sponsor Partnership Network would serve to bridge the gap as servicemembers leave the military and continue their education, seek gainful employment, and apply for benefits. Through **Resolution No. 12: Accountability and Enhancements of Transition Assistance**

Program; Outcomes and Delivery for Today's Digital Transitioning Servicemembers, The American Legion supports programs to help transitioned and transitioning servicemembers navigate their benefits and employment after completing their military service. Additionally, the program may serve as a valuable tool for gathering metrics on transitioning service members and employment outcomes that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain.

NIFA INVESTS OVER \$10M FOR FOOD SAFETY OUTREACH, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced today an investment of \$10 million for [21 grants](#) to develop and implement food safety and Food Safety Modernization Act-related training, education, extension outreach and technical assistance for food processors and farmers with small to mid-size operations.

Awards are made under three categories: Multistate Education and Training Projects, Community Outreach Projects and Collaborative Engagement Supplements. In FY 2021, NIFA made 13 Collaborative Education and Training Project awards, four Community Outreach Project awards and four Regional Center awards.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 48 million people in this country get sick from foodborne illness each year. Education and outreach are essential for ensuring our food supply is safe from the field to the table," said NIFA Director Dr. Carrie Castille.



"NIFA's integrated approach to enhancing food safety practices includes multi-state coordination, community outreach and collaborative projects that enable small farm operators, wholesalers and small-scale processors to get the support they need," she said. "This program helps deliver critical trainings and resources that equip our small business owners with tools to provide safe, high-quality food, strengthen their businesses and contribute to national nutrition security."

Examples of the [21 funded FSOP grants](#) include:

Additional communities supported through this [Food Safety Outreach Competitive Grant Program](#) include beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, veteran farmers and ranchers, and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

- The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), passed into law in 2011 with food codes that protect communities from foodborne illness, largely focuses on training for large farmers and ranchers with commercial operations. **Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, Inc.**, will modify the FSMA training curriculum for Tribal growers, producers, and traditional harvesters so that they will increase their knowledge on safe handling of produce and traditional and wild foods. (\$300,000)
- **Auburn University's** project, "Building a Food Safety Training Program to Empower

Disadvantaged Producers in Alabama - Empowering Farmers Project," will develop a food safety training program to empower limited-resource, minority farmers in the Black Belt region of Alabama. These small farmers have access to the fertile black belt soil, yet they lack access and adequate information to reap the full benefits of this resource. (\$300,000)

- **Oregon State University's** project, "Western Regional Center to Enhance Food Safety," will continue to foster collaboration in food safety education and stakeholder support of FSMA implementation. Leveraging a multi-institutional infrastructure already established across the U.S. Western Region, this initiative will expand the education network to include

additional participants from Land-grant Universities, Alaska Native-serving, Native Hawaiian-serving, and Hispanic-serving Agricultural Institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations from 13 western states and two Pacific territories. (\$793,592)

NIFA invests in and advances agricultural research, education, and Extension across the nation to make transformative discoveries that solve societal challenges. NIFA supports initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture and applies an integrated approach to ensure that groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach the people who can put them into practice. In FY2020, NIFA's total investment was \$1.95 billion.

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Homelessness & Housing

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division participated in the review of a draft discussion bill calling for the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs to submit a report on the efficacy of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Shallow Subsidy program. SSVF is a program designed to rapidly rehouse and provide guidance and case management services to veteran families who are homeless or at imminent risk of being homeless. The program has assisted more than 77,500 veterans, and of those discharged from the program, 80% obtained permanent housing.¹ While participating in SSVF, veterans can obtain benefits to include healthcare, financial planning, and legal services, child-care, and housing counseling. It is likely that most participants will have already received rental assistance through SSVF; however, they remain rent-burdened. The Shallow Subsidy program serves as a tool to help remedy this issue.

The Shallow Subsidy program's primary intent is to provide rental assistance to extremely and very low-income veteran households, generally after receiving traditional rapid rehousing of homeless prevention assistance through SSVF.² It's part of a progressive engagement approach to prevent veteran family households from regressing back into homelessness. The subsidy is paid directly to landlords on behalf of the veteran household by SSVF grantees.³ The maximum amount that may be provided is 35% of the local

¹ Veterans' Health Administration Homeless Programs Officer. Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report. Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program

² Supportive Services of Veteran Families Shallow Subsidy Service FAQ.
https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/SSVF_Shallow_Subsidy_FAQ.pdf

³ Definition of "grantees": "Private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives who can provide supportive services to very low-income Veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing."
https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/home/general_program_info_regs

Fair Market Rent.⁴ Veterans may receive the benefit for two years and are expected to pay their portion of the remaining rent. The lack of affordable housing remains a national crisis, exacerbated by the coronavirus (COVID-19) health emergency and the high demand and short supply of affordable housing options.

As the affordable housing crisis continues, the VA intends to expand access to SSVF resources, such as rental subsidies, to all counties and equivalents within the 50 United States (U.S), the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. This action may expand the pool of affordable housing, thereby providing program participants access to a broader rental market.⁵ The Secretary of Veterans' Affairs' report to Congress may be the driving force to ensure that the necessary resources are appropriated in order to ensure the expansion of this program to assist further homeless veterans and those at imminent risk of being homeless.

Recognizing how unique and essential the SSVF program is in preventing at-risk veterans from becoming homeless and in quickly resettling homeless veterans, The American Legion supports this draft bill through **Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program,**⁶

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a National Call on HoUSed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing webinar, held by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition. The purpose of the webinar was to provide a brief update on pending legislation such as the Build Back Better Act and updates on the Emergency Housing Assistance (EHR) program and its effectiveness. Diane Yentel, President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition opened the meeting and stated that the movement for housing justice is stronger than ever and applauded President Biden for framing housing as a human right.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) was also in attendance. He stated that for decades, public housing has been underfunded and that when families have safe and secure housing, not only do they have lower rates of eviction but also better academic achievement, lower hospitalization, and improved mental health. Additionally, he stated that the high demand for housing is increasing the rental and home process for everyone. Building additional housing for low-income families will reduce housing costs. He lauded an initiative for First-Generation down-payment assistance and stated that the pathway to homeownership is a catalyst to build intergenerational wealth for families.

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Chair, Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, United States Senate attended. He emphasized that there is no more important issue in the country than to ensure people have a clean, accessible, safe, and affordable place to live. Additionally, he stated that affordable housing is a gateway to a healthy life and that infrastructure includes housing and building a foundation for success in communities.

⁴ Definition of Fair Market Rent (FMRs): “FMRs regularly published by HUD, represent the cost to rent a moderately-priced dwelling unit in the local housing market.”

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/landlord/fmr

⁵ Federal Register: A Notice by the Veterans Affairs Department on 08/05/2021. “Rental and Utility Assistance for Certain Low-Income Veteran Families” <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/08/05/2021-16723/rental-and-utility-assistance-for-certain-low-income-veteran-families>

⁶ The American Legion. Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program.

<https://archive.legion.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12203/5658/2016N340.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>



SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Gov. Wolf, Legislators Laud Proposed Legislation to Provide Consistent Support for Small, Diverse, Veteran Businesses

PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SMALL, DIVERSE, VETERAN SMALL BUSINESSES

State senators on Tuesday announced new legislation to ensure that small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses receive support and equal opportunities in state contracts. The bipartisan bill, sponsored by senators Vincent Hughes and Camera Bartolotta aims to give small businesses an opportunity to compete for contracting opportunities with state government contracts.

SB900 legislatively establishes the goal-setting program administered by the PA Department of General Services, Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities. Goal-setting establishes minimum SDB participation and spending commitment levels for solicitations for construction, design professional services, supplies and services. In addition, the legislation calls for a disparity study to be completed every five years to maintain the constitutionality of the

programs and keep aspirational targets up-to-date for the goal-setting program. The legislation further removes the 100-employee limit from the definition of “Small Business” allowing size and revenue limits to be set on an industry-by-industry basis which is more consistent with federal program eligibility requirements.

Senator Camera Bartolotta, one of the lead sponsors of senate bill 900 said the bill will offer more than 5,000 small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses across Pennsylvania the tools needed to be more dominant in their fields.

“To provide an immediate and meaningful impact by expanding opportunities for these businesses to compete for and be utilized in state contracts,” Bartolotta said.

Senator Vincent Hughes, who sponsored the bill alongside Bartolotta added it will increase participation in state contracts for minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.

“To make sure that those businesses who are historically not had an opportunity, get an opportunity. That they get to the table,” Hughes said.

Governor Tom Wolf today applauded proposed legislation that will statutorily establish policies and programs to ensure that small, diverse and veteran-owned businesses continue to receive the support and opportunities they deserve in state contracting.

The state has spent more than \$2.7 billion towards small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses since 2015 when Governor Wolf announced an executive order. The catalyst for the proposed legislation evolved from the Governor’s 2015 “Executive Order on Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities in Commonwealth Procurement and in Pennsylvania’s Economy.”

The catalyst for the proposed legislation evolved from the Governor’s 2015 Executive Order on Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities in Commonwealth Procurement and in Pennsylvania’s Economy. The order created the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities, or BDISBO, within the Department of General Services, the Governor’s Advisory Council on Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities and led to the 2018 Statewide Disparity Study which examined disparities in the commonwealth’s contracting system and made recommendations for improvement.

“We have been very successful in implementing policies and programs that give our small-

diverse- and veteran-owned businesses a fairer and more equitable chance to compete for – and obtain – contracting opportunities with state government,” Governor Wolf said. “We also know the important role that consistency plays in ensuring the continued success of any policy or program, which is why this effort to legislatively establish the programs and policies administered through the Department of General Services Bureau of Diversity Inclusion & Small Business Opportunities is so significant.

“The commonwealth must continue to its part to support small diverse and veteran-owned businesses in Pennsylvania. And that means we need to pass the important legislation that my colleagues are introducing today,” Governor Wolf said.

Senator Bartolotta added right now this is just a proposed bill but adds getting it passed is a priority.

Pennsylvania state lawmakers announced new legislation on Tuesday, September 28th that aims to provide small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses with equal opportunity to compete in state contracts. The bill, known as SB900, creates a benchmark program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of General Services, Bureau of Diversity, and Small Business Opportunities to set minimum participation and spending commitment levels for veteran-owned small businesses in solicitations among a variety of industries. This program aligns with the spirit of American Legion **Resolution No. 21: "Support Reasonable Set-Aside of Federal Procurements and Contracts"**, which supports development and passage of federal, state and local veteran business development legislation that provides assistance to all veterans to ensure opportunities exist for veterans to start or grow a small business.



TECH TRANSITION TOOLKIT

Shifting from military to civilian life is challenging, especially during uncertain times. But you can do it. Your service has already instilled the skills and experience you need to build a rewarding career in tech.

Not quite sure what steps to take? Microsoft is here to help you. Take it from these Microsoft Software and Systems Academy (MSSA) grads and mentors who've been in your shoes—with determination and guidance, you can keep moving forward.

We know you're no stranger to overcoming obstacles in pursuit of opportunities. You've

trained hard and pushed yourself. You've worked with your teams to see each mission through. And you know that even during the most challenging and unexpected times, progress is possible.

That's why Microsoft Military Affairs created this Tech Transition Toolkit: to help you take simple steps toward achieving your next goal and standing out—even virtually—in today's job market. Because no matter where you are in your journey, we know you already have what it takes to succeed.

This toolkit offers simple tips for how you can build a career in tech.

Think of it as an introduction to what you can do to level up your soft skills and stand out—even from home.

Download the toolkit to explore how to:



Stand out from the competition

Get inspired to make an impression with recruiters and hiring managers.



Break into tech and thrive

Hear from MSSA grads about what worked best for them.



Leverage your LinkedIn network

Boost your job search by making and maintaining meaningful virtual connections.



Build a winning resume

Make it all about you—and your strengths — to launch a new career.



Prepare your virtual workspace

Optimize your setup to avoid common work-from-home mishaps.



Know your tech lingo

Learn the ABCs of the tech industry to show up like a pro.

Staff Meetings & Conferences on Small Business

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a business leader briefing at the Public-Private Strategies Institute with Ranking Member of the House Small Business Committee, Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO), moderated by Candace Waterman, President & CEO of Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP). The event focused on what Congress is doing to help small

business owners recover from the pandemic. Staff members also represented the Legion at a Partner Meeting the Coalition for Veteran Owned Business (CVOB), where many of the nation's largest companies, including Walmart, Lyft, and Johnson & Johnson, provided updates on their initiatives to increase veteran hiring and contracting opportunities within their organizations.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division began drafting a memorandum to the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs requesting the formation of a Small Business Advisory Committee for the VA to serve as a liaison on matters of concern for veteran business owners to the Secretary and the Department.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Congressman Barr's Office, Congressman Valadao's Office, Senator Moran's Office, Congressman Waltz's Office, and Senator Scott's Office to discuss a variety of issues of importance to veteran-owned small businesses; Most notably, Legion staff highlighted concerns with the possibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs moving away from its current acquisition model, which is compliant with the Veterans First (VETs First) program, to other procurement platforms that are not compliant with VETs First. Other issues discussed included the expansion of broadband to rural small businesses, increasing the number of Veteran Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), and expanding collaborative efforts between the veteran business community and the Small Business Administration (SBA).



**Congressman
Andy Barr
(R-KY-6)**



**Congressman
David Valadao
(R-CA-21)**



**Senator
Jerry Moran
(R-KS)**



**Congressman
Michael Waltz
(R-FL-06)**



**Senator
Tim Scott
(R-SC)**



**Congressman
Anthony Brown
(D-MD-04)**

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with representatives of Congressman Anthony G. Brown's Office to discuss a draft bill on the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program. VE&E staff expressed several concerns regarding the draft bill and its potential impact. The primary concern was the potential financial risk to servicemembers and veterans with the elimination of the Fannie Mac conforming loan limitation. Other concerns pertained to the potential increased risk and liability to the home loan guaranty program and the assurance that safeguards were in place to protect service members and veterans. VE&E staff expressed that The American Legion reaffirms its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Service and supports any administrative and/or legislative efforts that will improve and strengthen the Loan Guaranty Service's ability to serve America's veterans.



CAREER FAIRS

Virtual Job Fair

October 7, 2021

1pm - 3pm ET

VIRTUAL HIRING EVENT: MULTI-INDUSTRY

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

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)

[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.



LEGISLATION TRACKING

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

Draft Legislation on Work Study for Half-Time Students: To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for a certain work-study allowance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain individuals who pursue programs of rehabilitation, education, or training on at least a half-time basis.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Repay MGIB: To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Death GI Bill Transfer: To amend title 38, United States Code to provide for the transfer of entitlement to educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs when an eligible individual dies after approval of transfer and before transferring all of the individual's entitlement, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Extend FRY After Discharge: To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include spouses and children of individuals who die from a service-connected disability within 120 days of serving in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft legislation on Extend VRE Time: To extend the delimiting period for certain individuals to use educational assistance benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on SCRA for Education: "To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to establish protections under that Act for a member of the Armed Forces who leaves a course of education, paid for with certain educational assistance, to perform certain service."

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Student Childcare Voucher: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay to certain veterans, who receive certain educational assistance furnished by the Secretary, a weekly stipend for child care services."

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Prohibit CH. 35 for HS: To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the use of entitlement to educational assistance under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program for secondary school education.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on WARTAC Report: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report on the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

[Resolution No. 105: Support and Expand Warrior Transition Advancement Course \(WARTAC\)](#)

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

Draft Legislation on Homeless Grant Elimination of Matching: Adjustment of Grants Awarded by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs for Comprehensive Service Programs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Eliminate Loan Limitations: To amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the Freddie Mac conforming loan limitation for loans made to veterans with remaining guaranty or insurance loan entitlement under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

[Resolution No. 314: Support Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee](#)

Draft Legislation on SSVF Report Requirement To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the shallow subsidy program under the supportive services for veteran families program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

[Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Program](#)

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Substance Abuse Pilot: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on substance use and alcohol use disorder recovery for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

Resolution: N/A

Draft Legislation on Increase Homelessness Per Diem: To amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

[Resolution No. 24: Support Funding and Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem Program](#)

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Elderly Pilot: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on grants for care for elderly homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Tech Assistance: To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide technical assistance to recipients of grants for supportive services for very low-income families in permanent housing and comprehensive service programs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

Resolution:

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Extend HVRP: To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase and extend the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

Action Taken: Testimony on 9/21/21

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

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



- We are on the Web:
 - <https://www.legion.org/>
- VE&E Publications:
 - <https://www.legion.org/publications/veterans-employment-education>
- 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/homelesssta skforce>
 - <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans/resources>
- Veterans Education Benefits:
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits>
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/federallyenefits>
- Veteran Small Business Funding Program:
 - <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs>

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MARIE WOODSON SEEKS TO FAST TRACK VETERANS INTO HEALTH CARE AMID STAFF SHORTAGES

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PA. LAWMAKERS MOVE TO HELP MORE SMALL DIVERSE, VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES LAND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

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MICROSOFT : HOW GRADUATES OF MICROSOFT'S PROGRAM FOR MILITARY VETERANS ARE USING TECH TO CREATE COMMUNITY

“We count on servicemembers to be confident and unafraid to move forward towards any challenge, which they are well trained to do.” [Continue reading the article](#)

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