



Advancing Veteran Success IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Case Highlights of Vocational Accelerator Programs at Del Mar College,
Tarrant County College, and Wake Technical Community College

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Del Mar College, Tarrant County College, and Wake Technical Community College exemplify how institutions committed to advancing veterans employment can leverage external funding to design, develop, and deliver accelerated vocational instruction to veterans and transitioning service members. With support from the Vocational Acceleration Grants Program, a project funded by the Walmart Foundation and led by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), these schools created unique continuing education programs focused on equipping veterans with skills highly sought after by local and regional employers. These case highlights showcase how each program blazed a trail to success. Through an examination of the programs' approaches to recruitment and service delivery, as well as a survey of their achievements to date, the case highlights identify five best practices that could inform other efforts to use vocational acceleration as a means of advancing veterans employment:

- ✓ Pursue a multi-faceted recruitment strategy that leverages both personal- and institutional-level relationships with public, private, and nonprofit partners;
- ✓ Design a program that harnesses existing resources and infrastructure to maximize program enrollment capacity and minimize time required to complete training;
- ✓ Raise program stakeholders' "veterans IQ" by providing tools and knowledge necessary to understand the unique needs veterans bring to the learning environment;
- ✓ Continuously gather data and feedback to tailor training to area employers' needs; and
- ✓ Plan for the future: develop a vision and a plan of action for delivering additional training modules that equip veterans with more high-demand skills.

THE WALMART FOUNDATION VOCATIONAL ACCELERATION GRANTS PROGRAM

Veterans and transitioning service members have the potential to make a tremendous contribution to the workplace, offering their employers a unique combination of discipline, leadership experience, and unwavering commitment to mission accomplishment. For many employers, hiring a veteran is not only good for families and communities—it's good for business.

Recognizing employers' need for individuals with coveted vocational skills—and the opportunity veterans offer these employers—the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), with support from the Walmart Foundation, created the Vocational Acceleration Grants Program ("Vocational Accelerator Grant Program"). Launched in 2013, the purpose of this effort is to seed, cultivate, and provide technical support for a network of workforce development programs focused on delivering vocational education to veterans and transitioning service members. The funding supports programs that equip veterans with high demand vocational skills, and connects them with employers actively seeking out those skills. Each program aims to deliver a fast-paced, vocation-specific sequence of instruction and training that prepares veterans for jobs with community employers. Since the training occurs outside the confines and constraints of a traditional two- or four-year degree track, the programs offer veterans an opportunity to quickly acquire new and highly sought-after skills that accelerate their employment.



BEST PRACTICES

FOR DELIVERING ACCELERATED VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTION TO VETERANS AND TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS



An examination of Del Mar College, Tarrant County College, and Wake Technical Community College vocational accelerator programs points to best practices that may be instructive in the design and implementation of vocational accelerator programs at other workforce development institutions.



RECRUITING

- ✓ Pursue a multi-faceted recruitment strategy that leverages both personal- and institutional-level relationships with public, private, and nonprofit partners



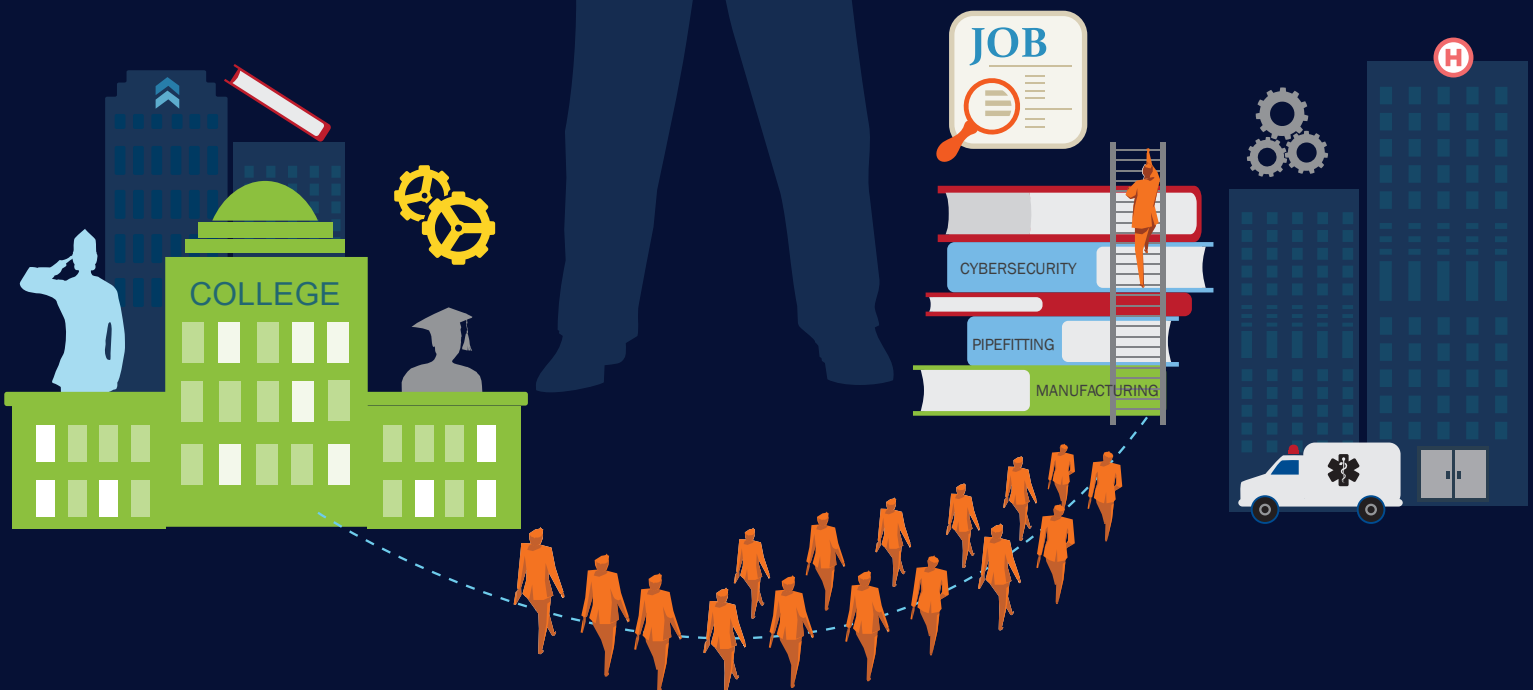
DELIVERING INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

- ✓ Design a program that harnesses existing resources and infrastructure to maximize program enrollment capacity and minimize time required to complete training



GETTING RESULTS: ACHIEVING AND GROWING PROGRAM IMPACT

- ✓ Raise program stakeholders' "veterans IQ" by providing tools and knowledge necessary to understand the unique needs veterans bring to the learning environment
- ✓ Continuously gather data and feedback to tailor training to area employers' needs
- ✓ Plan for the future: develop a vision and a plan of action for delivering additional training modules that equip veterans with more high-demand skills.



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