



# **WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT:**

The Relationship Between Job Preferences, Retention, and Earnings

Rosalinda V. Maury, M.S.  
Brice M. Stone, Ph.D.  
Deborah A. Bradbard, Ph.D.  
Nicholas J. Armstrong, Ph.D.  
J. Michael Haynie, Ph.D.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### **ROSALINDA VASQUEZ MAURY, M.S.**

Rosalinda Maury is the Director of Applied Research and Analytics at IVMF at Syracuse University. She has worked on numerous projects including the effects of personal financial mismanagement behaviors, training needs assessment, workload assessment, job and occupational analysis, equal pay for equal work, job compatibility assessment, and factors affecting military spouse and veteran employment. She has extensive experience in survey development and worldwide data collection, and has been responsible for developing, implementing, and managing surveys for data collection on the large and small scale. Her work has been featured in numerous publications and she has presented at various professional conferences. Maury received a master of science in psychology from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

### **BRICE STONE, PH.D.**

Brice Stone is an economic consultant with a broad background in government directed research and private sector research and business development. He works part-time for Metrica, Inc., a woman-owned small business, for which he has been employed for over 30 years. Though his primary area of research has been in behavioral science, his projects (for the government and private sector) have been wide ranging: modeling of personal indebtedness, modeling and analysis of enlisted and officer retention, modeling and analysis of enlisted accession flows, military training needs assessment and model development, analysis and modeling of terrorist behavior, modeling and evaluation of cross-cultural models for psychological operations (PSYOP), and modeling and analysis of adolescent aberrant behavior (smoking, drinking, drugs, promiscuity, etc.). Stone has provided economic consulting services to IVMF at Syracuse University. These consultant services have utilized his background and hands-on knowledge of database development/usage and behavioral analysis. He has worked with IVMF on projects dealing with veteran and military spouse employment, job related issues, and the long-term effects of military service. Stone received a Ph.D. in economics from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas.

### **DEBORAH BRADBARD, PH.D.**

Deborah Bradbard is a Senior Research Associate at IVMF at Syracuse University focused on veteran and military spouse employment and military financial readiness and transition. She served as the Director of Research and Policy at Blue Star Families and was one of the primary authors of the 2013 and 2014 Blue Star Families Annual Lifestyle Survey. Her work on military families and military financial literacy have been cited by the White House, members of Congress, CNN, the Center for Deployment Psychology, and the Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE). Bradbard previously worked as a consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton developing products focused on military mental health issues including PTSD, suicide, substance abuse, and traumatic brain injury. Bradbard received a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Auburn University.

### **NICHOLAS J. ARMSTRONG, PH.D.**

Nick Armstrong is the Senior Director for Research and Policy at IVMF at Syracuse University where he leads the IVMF's growing portfolio of applied research, policy analysis, and program measurement and evaluation efforts. Armstrong is also an affiliated public management faculty member in the Department of Public Administration and International Affairs at Syracuse University's Maxwell School. Before joining the IVMF, Armstrong served for six years as a research fellow at Syracuse University's Institute for National Security and Counter terrorism (INSCT) where he led government and privately sponsored projects on various security topics including security sector reform, wartime contracting, postconflict reconstruction, and community resilience. Armstrong is also an eight-year veteran of the U.S. Army, and served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia. Armstrong is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (B.S.) and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University (Ph.D., M.P.A.).

### **J. MICHAEL HAYNIE, PH.D.**

Mike Haynie is the Vice Chancellor of Syracuse University, providing strategic leadership to the University's veteran and military-connected programs, partnerships, and research. Haynie also serves as the Founding Executive Director of IVMF at Syracuse University. Mike completed a doctoral degree in entrepreneurship and business strategy at the University of Colorado, and previously served for 14 years as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. Haynie is currently the chairman of the U.S. Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, and in 2015 was appointed by VA Secretary Bob McDonald to serve as the vice chairman of the newly created MyVA Advisory Committee, chartered to set the course for long-term excellence and reform at the Department of Veteran Affairs.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The data used in this paper is from a prior research effort in collaboration with VetAdvisor aimed to better understand post-military veteran employment. We would like to acknowledge and thank all the veterans who took the time to fill out the survey and provided data to support this document. Thank you to Jacqui Buchanan, M.P.A., and Nathaniel Birnbaum for your research support for this document, as well as to Kerry Manahan and Dennis Kulis for their exceptional design work.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

Maury, R., Stone, B., Bradbard, D.A., Armstrong, N.A., Haynie, J.M. (2016, August). Workforce Readiness Alignment: The Relationship Between Job Preferences, Retention, and Earnings (Workforce Readiness Briefs, Paper No. 3). Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University.



# **WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT:**

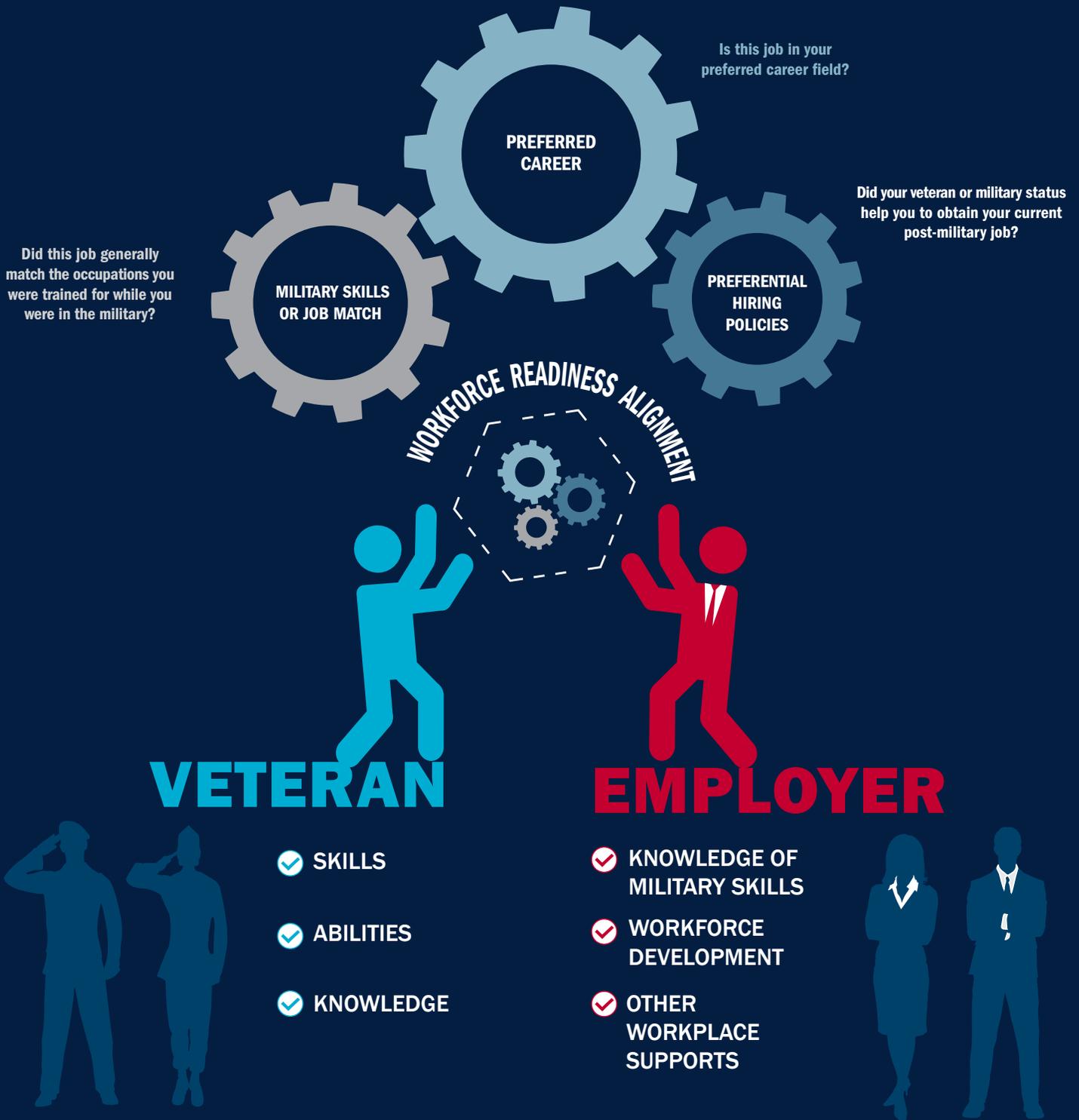
The Relationship Between Job Preferences, Retention, and Earnings

Rosalinda V. Maury, M.S.  
Brice M. Stone, Ph.D.  
Deborah A. Bradbard, Ph.D.  
Nicholas J. Armstrong, Ph.D.  
J. Michael Haynie, Ph.D.



# WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT

This paper focuses on testing propositions related to workforce readiness by examining the relationship between job preferences, military conferred skills, and a variety of outcome measures including retention, income, and perceptions about transition. Using self-reported data collected from veterans who transitioned from the military and are working in civilian jobs, our analysis demonstrates that the application of the skills gained in the military and securing employment in a desired career field are two critical factors in the transition process for both veterans and their employers.



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN Job Preferences, Retention, and Earnings



## INCOME, RETENTION, AND CHANGING EMPLOYERS OR CAREERS:

### MATCHING CAREER FIELDS INCREASES

#### RETENTION AND EARNINGS

Obtaining a job that matches one's preferred career field **increases** the likelihood of remaining in the job or career field, leading to higher job retention and higher personal income.

### MATCHING MILITARY OCCUPATION INCREASES

#### RETENTION AND EARNINGS

Obtaining a job that matches the occupation for which the veteran was trained while serving in the military also **increases** job retention and personal income.

### VETERAN STATUS INCREASES

#### RETENTION AND EARNINGS

Military experience is often viewed positively by employers, increasing the likelihood of being hired. This, in turn, leads to **increases** in job retention and higher personal income.



## ALIGNMENT

### CAREER PREFERENCES, MILITARY BACKGROUND, AND EMPLOYER USE OF MILITARY SKILLS ALL MATTER TO RETENTION.

Being in one's preferred or desired career field is an important factor that determines the best employment match for a transitioning veteran. Military occupational specialty (MOS) may be another factor in determining the best employment match for a transitioning veteran, but it is not the only factor. Being with an employer that utilizes the skills and training from the military (e.g., teamwork, leadership and management skills, etc.) is another.

### FINDING FIT IS A LEARNING PROCESS THAT TAKES TIME; OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE MEMBERS TO LEARN ABOUT CIVILIAN CAREERS MAY ACCELERATE THE PROCESS AND THEIR SUCCESS.

Veterans were more likely to be working in their preferred career field over time and with each subsequent change of jobs after their first civilian job, likely due to the accumulation of experience in civilian jobs. This implies that relevant work experience gained prior to military transition may provide accelerated pathways for separating service members to more quickly secure a job and ultimately find a fit in their preferred career field.

### MANY VETERANS SEEK DIFFERENT CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS AND CAREERS, BUT STILL WANT TO APPLY THEIR MILITARY SKILLS.

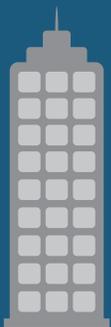
When veterans enter the workforce, the majority sought employment that did not align with their military jobs. However, the majority of veterans reported that they prefer to utilize their military conferred skills.



## TRANSITION

### PRIOR PREPARATION FACILITATES JOB MATCH-MAKING AND TRANSITION.

Those who felt strongly that they were "well-prepared to successfully navigate the transition from military to civilian life" had a job that (1) matched their preferred career field, (2) matched the occupation for which they were trained while in the military, and (3) veteran or military status helped them obtain their job.







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Overview and Purpose .....                              | 3  |
| Summary And Highlights.....                             | 4  |
| Veteran Employment: What We Know .....                  | 4  |
| Methods .....   | 5  |
| Key Factors in Workforce Readiness Alignment.....       | 6  |
| Alignment with Each Factor over Time.....               | 9  |
| Changing Employers and Career Fields.....               | 10 |
| Job Duration.....                                       | 12 |
| Income .....  | 16 |
| Rank and Education.....                                 | 18 |
| Veteran Transition from Military to Civilian Life ..... | 20 |
| Conclusion .....  | 24 |
| Recommendations.....                                    | 25 |
| Recommendations for Employers.....                      | 25 |
| Recommendations for Veteran Job Seekers.....            | 25 |
| Resources .....   | 26 |
| End Notes .....   | 27 |
| Appendix.....   | 28 |



## OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Today more than 11 million veterans<sup>1</sup>, approximately half of all U.S. veterans, are active participants in the civilian labor force. Another one million service members will join the labor force as they transition to civilian life by 2020.<sup>2</sup> Consider, too, that nearly one in every four of recent military separations were involuntary.<sup>3</sup> Significant numbers of separating service members are unexpectedly facing the daunting task of navigating the transition from military service to the civilian world of work.<sup>4</sup> For these individuals and their families, workforce preparation and vocational planning is critical to ensure family and financial stability in their transition.

Despite numerous transition-focused resources available to veterans, reliable and predictable pathways to civilian employment remain elusive. Translating military experience, obtaining educational and vocational credentials, identifying the right job opportunities, and overall job availability are among many challenges that veterans face in transition.<sup>5</sup> As a result, post-service transition remains a key focus area for policy makers, employers, researchers, and veterans themselves—particularly on issues related to employment and career readiness.

Through support and collaboration with USAA, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) has launched a series of Workforce Readiness Briefs to explore the topic of workforce readiness as it relates to transitioning service members and veterans in the civilian labor force. The inaugural paper in this series defined workforce readiness as the combination of what the veteran brings to the workplace and what the employer does to proactively help veterans succeed there (Workforce Readiness Briefs, Paper No. 1: Work After Service: Developing Workforce Readiness and Veteran Talent for the Future). The second paper revisited the business case for hiring veterans and discussed how businesses can leverage the rare, valuable, and differentiating qualities that veterans bring to the workplace in order to secure a competitive advantage (Workforce Readiness Briefs, Paper No. 2: Revisiting the Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: A Strategy for Cultivating Competitive Advantage).

As the next and third in the series, this paper examines the concept of workforce readiness by examining the interactions between career preferences, job matching, performance, and retention. The goals of this paper are to further explore and highlight barriers and challenges that veterans face when obtaining and retaining employment, and to understand how employers and organizations can apply the concept of workforce readiness to best structure their veteran-centric employee hiring programs and ultimately improve veteran retention in the workplace.



## SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Simply put, investments that create pathways for veterans to secure the right job—one that matches skills and career aspirations—will generate positive returns. In other words, programs and services that improve the likelihood of job-seeking veterans to quickly find jobs that match their preferred career field reduce the time and opportunity costs associated with their job search. Considering career-field preferences and existing skills in a job search also helps facilitate a smoother transition from military to civilian life or to a new career. In addition, veterans who secure employment in their preferred career fields exhibit longer average job tenure, higher salary, and greater perceived quality of life.

Building upon the work of the previous two papers, this paper focuses on testing propositions related to workforce readiness. Workforce readiness was defined as the relationship between what a veteran offers the workplace in skills, knowledge, and abilities, and the employer's ability to leverage that veteran's military conferred skills to their first, best use in the firm. Here, the research examines the relationship between job preferences, military conferred skills, and a variety of outcome measures including retention, income, and perceptions about transition. Using self-reported data collected from veterans who transitioned from the military and are working in civilian jobs, the analysis demonstrates that the application of the skills gained in the military and securing employment in a desired career field are two critical factors in the transition process for both veterans and their employers. From this effort, several findings emerged that support the following conclusions:

- **Matching career fields increases retention and earnings.** Obtaining a job that matches one's preferred career field increases the likelihood of remaining in the job or career field, leading to higher job retention and higher personal income. Additionally, noting the competitiveness for civilian roles, matching existing skills to future employment opportunities increases the veteran's chances and decreases the time necessary to procure meaningful work.

- **Matching military occupation increases retention and earnings.** Obtaining a job that matches the occupation for which the veteran was trained while serving in the military also increases job retention and personal income.
- **Veteran status increases retention and earnings.** Military experience is often viewed positively by employers, increasing the likelihood of being hired. This, in turn, leads to increases in job retention and higher personal income.
- **Prior preparation facilitates job match-making and transition.** Those who felt strongly that they were "well-prepared to successfully navigate the transition from military to civilian life" had a job that (1) matched their preferred career field, (2) matched the occupation for which they were trained while in the military, and (3) veteran/military status helped them obtain their job.
- **Career preferences, military background, and employer use of military skills all matter to retention.** Being in one's preferred or desired career field is an important factor that determines the best employment match for a transitioning veteran. Prior military occupational specialty (MOS) may be another factor in job matching, but it is not the only one. Working for an employer that utilizes the skills and training from the military (e.g., teamwork, leadership and management skills, etc.) is another.
- **Many veterans seek different civilian occupations and careers, but still want to apply their military skills.** When veterans enter the workforce, the majority sought employment that did not align with their prior military jobs. However, the majority of veterans reported that they prefer to utilize the skills they gained through the military.
- **Finding fit is a learning process that takes time; opportunities for service members to learn about civilian careers may accelerate the process and their success.** Veterans were more likely to be working in their preferred career field over time and with each subsequent change of jobs after their first civilian job, likely due to the accumulation of experience. This implies that relevant work experience gained prior to military transition (e.g., pre-military employment or training programs such as DoD SkillBridge or Onward to Opportunity) may provide accelerated pathways for separating service members to more quickly secure a job and ultimately find a fit in their preferred career field.



## VETERAN EMPLOYMENT: WHAT WE KNOW

Today more than 11 million veterans, approximately half of all U.S. veterans (21.2 million), are active participants in the civilian labor force.<sup>6</sup> More than three million veterans have joined the civilian workforce since September 2001 and another one million are expected to join by 2020.<sup>7</sup>

**Economic Performance.** The unemployment gap between veterans and nonveterans has closed considerably in recent years, due in part to a recovering U.S. economy and more employers making concerted efforts to hire veterans. Over the past decade, specific subgroups of U.S. veterans have experienced greater unemployment than their nonveteran counterparts, especially in the wake of the Great Recession.<sup>8</sup> This gap was most acute for younger veterans separating from the military in their 20s, who saw the worst levels in 2011.<sup>9</sup> Female veterans also fared worse in the job market than men.<sup>10</sup> Still, unemployment for younger post-9/11 veterans remains high compared to the national average.<sup>11</sup>

With respect to earnings, veterans tend to out-earn their nonveteran counterparts as a group.<sup>12</sup> The earnings advantage is the greatest for veterans with only a high school education, compared to nonveterans with a high school diploma or less.<sup>13</sup> The earnings advantage is also apparent among minority veterans, who, alongside female veterans, are also more likely to pursue college and earn an associate's degree.<sup>14</sup>

**Veteran Hiring.** As mentioned above, employers are increasingly making considerable strides in hiring veterans. Coalitions like the Veterans Jobs Mission, Hiring our Heroes, and a growing number of public-private partnerships have already helped hundreds of thousands of veterans and their spouses find employment. Educational programs for veterans, employers, and recruiters with military experience have shown to increase competitive civilian employment among veterans.<sup>15</sup>

Employers are recognizing the value of veteran talent in the workplace<sup>16</sup>, even beyond job performance<sup>17</sup>, such as high levels of resilience and adaptability, advanced team building skills, strong work ethic, experience with cultural diversity, and experience and knowledge of international working environments.<sup>18</sup> Even so, some employers still struggle to attract and recruit veterans, have difficulty understanding how military experience translates to the civilian workplace, and are constrained by the need for specific skills or experience that may be limited among the pool of veteran applicants.<sup>19</sup> Many employers also struggle with accommodating the needs of veterans with disabilities, such as PTSD.<sup>20</sup>

**Employment Outcomes.** While much is known about veteran employment and earnings, there is a knowledge gap in understanding service members' overall readiness to separate from the military and enter the civilian workforce, how that state of readiness influences career preferences, and the pathways that lead to employment success. This paper examines existing data to investigate the relationships between preferred career and job preferences, military skill matching, job tenure, and income.<sup>21</sup> Organizations may apply the results to best position their veteran-centric

employee initiatives (e.g., recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retention) to improve veteran performance and retention in the workplace.

## METHODS

This paper relies upon the 2014 Veterans Job Retention Survey, an IVMF and VetAdvisor survey that explores why veterans leave their initial post-military jobs.<sup>22</sup> The survey included 167 questions on service members' experiences in their first and subsequent (up to six) post-military jobs including:

- job title
- salary
- tenure
- similarity to prior military occupation(s)
- alignment with preferred career field
- veteran hiring preference
- reasons for leaving
- other relevant service member characteristics

**Survey and Analysis.** The majority of questions on the survey were optional, allowing respondents to skip any questions they were uncomfortable answering. Other questions allowed respondents to select all applicable responses. The number of respondents per question varied throughout the survey due to variation in the number of post-military jobs indicated (1-6). Answers such as "Does not apply" and "Prefer not to answer" responses were coded as missing, and multiple response sets were created for questions that allowed more than one response. Data was analyzed using Stata (statistical software). Frequencies and basic crosstabs were performed on the data in order to perform univariate and basic bivariate analyses. T-tests were also performed to test statistically significant differences between variables.

**Sample.** Notably, the survey relies on a nonrandom convenience sample of 1,484 respondents (84 percent completion rate), though researchers took lengthy measures to mitigate sampling bias through broad recruitment outreach via social media and veteran serving non-profit, human service, and professional organizations. More than 43 percent of the sample respondents served 20 or more years on active duty service, while 24 percent served 4 years or less. More than 84 percent of the veteran respondents were male and the average age for the veteran respondents was 48.5 years with a median age of 49 years.

Nearly 29 percent of the respondents indicated that they have a bachelor's degree while more than 50 percent of the respondents have a bachelor's degree or more. More than 65 percent of the respondents were currently working, more than 24 percent were not working but looking for work, and 9.6 percent were not working and not looking for work.

## KEY FACTORS IN WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT

Workforce readiness is a term with many definitions. One definition offered by the National Work Readiness Council is “being able to deliver value in frontline jobs in entry level workplaces.”<sup>23</sup> This definition is limiting, if not inappropriate, for many veterans. Veterans—particularly those with long service records anticipating comparable civilian work—are generally not entry level job seekers, having already gained significant work experience and skills through their military service. These skills include both cognitive (e.g., proficiency in mathematics, reading, writing) and non-cognitive (e.g., personality, maturity, attitudes, values, beliefs) abilities.

On one hand, some active duty military jobs have direct or close counterparts in the civilian sector, for example, jet engine mechanics, air traffic controllers, military police, and information technology specialists. Transitioning service members who choose a path to similar civilian careers such as these can more easily translate their military experience or demonstrate their skills to civilian employers.

On the other hand, many military jobs (e.g., infantry, field artillery, armor etc.) do not have a direct civilian equivalent. Moreover, many service members prefer to embark on new, distinctly different civilian careers. In either case, service members will need to effectively translate their military experience and skills to civilian employers and will likely need to seek out additional training, education, or experience to secure the job or career they want. Without such credentials or evidence of relevant experience, employers may be reluctant to hire them. Additionally, assuming a civilian environment of highly qualified competition, a lack of similar experience will be a disadvantage to the transitioning veteran. In each scenario, ensuring that veterans are workforce ready requires the linkage between individual,

military-conferred skills and civilian-sector skills, both cognitive and non-cognitive.

Further, military service cultivates and enhances one’s non-cognitive abilities like responsibility, teamwork, and working in difficult environments and conditions. Despite differences in individual aptitudes, many of these non-cognitive skills are further developed and enhanced through service regardless of the job or duty assignment. These experiences are assets to civilian employers, but because these skills were acquired in a military context, they may need translation for civilian employers who may not intuitively understand how such skills apply to a given position or role. This may be especially true for employers unfamiliar with military occupations and the associated skills and abilities.

Previous Workforce Readiness Briefs have highlighted that, for transitioning service members and veterans, workforce readiness is an interaction between what the veteran brings to the workplace and the employer’s needs with respect to the employee’s experience, qualifications, time, and geography. Thus, a focus of this research is to examine the relationship between the skills required for a post-military civilian job and the skills acquired or learned during military service. As the analysis of veterans presented in this paper demonstrates, matching veterans with their desired career field—where they are able to use the skills they acquired while in the military—benefits veterans and employers alike.

To understand workforce readiness alignment, we asked participants the following questions for each post-service job (up to six):

- Is this job in your preferred career field?
- Did this job generally match the occupations you were trained for while you were in the military?
- Did your veteran/military status help you to obtain your current post-military job?



# KEY FACTORS IN WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT

Did this job generally match the occupations you were trained for while you were in the military?



Is this job in your preferred career field?

Did your veteran or military status help you to obtain your current post-military job?

WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT



## VETERAN



## EMPLOYER



- ✔ SKILLS
- ✔ ABILITIES
- ✔ KNOWLEDGE

- ✔ KNOWLEDGE OF MILITARY SKILLS
- ✔ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- ✔ OTHER WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

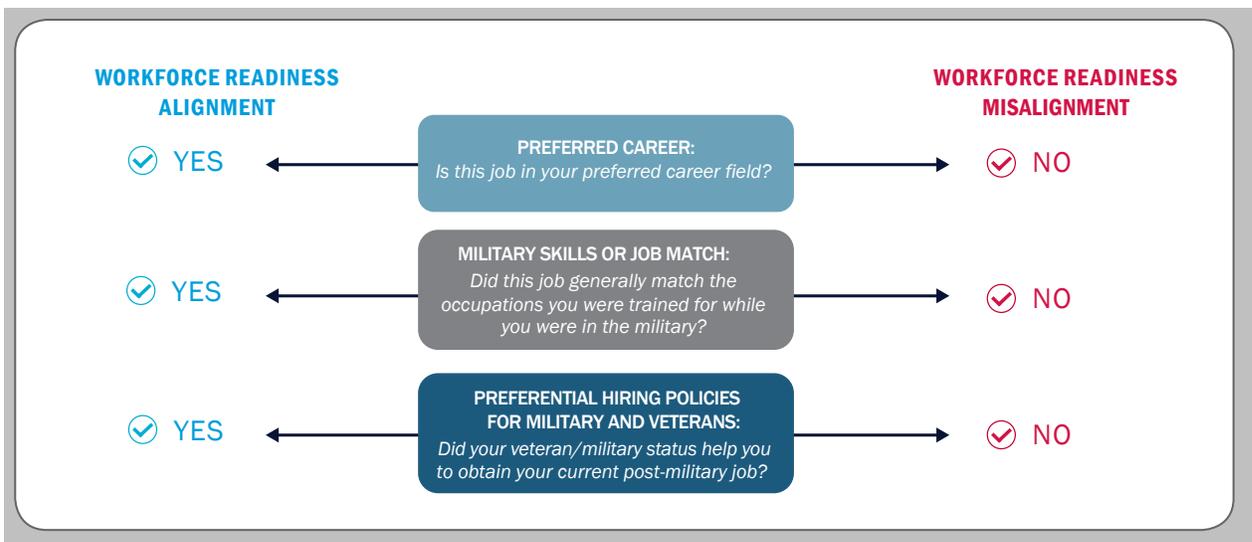




**Employers appreciate the service Veterans have provided. Unfortunately, they do not realize the knowledge, skills, and abilities that Veterans can bring their business”**

**-Air Force veteran**

Considering these three aspects, the data reveal a stronger association with positive outcomes such as salary, retention, and job satisfaction if workforce readiness alignment is present. In other words, respondents who indicated “Yes” to all three questions also tended to report higher salaries, longer retention, and greater job satisfaction. When the respondent indicated “No” to all three questions then there is greater workforce readiness misalignment, corresponding with lower salaries and retention.



## ALIGNMENT WITH EACH FACTOR OVER TIME

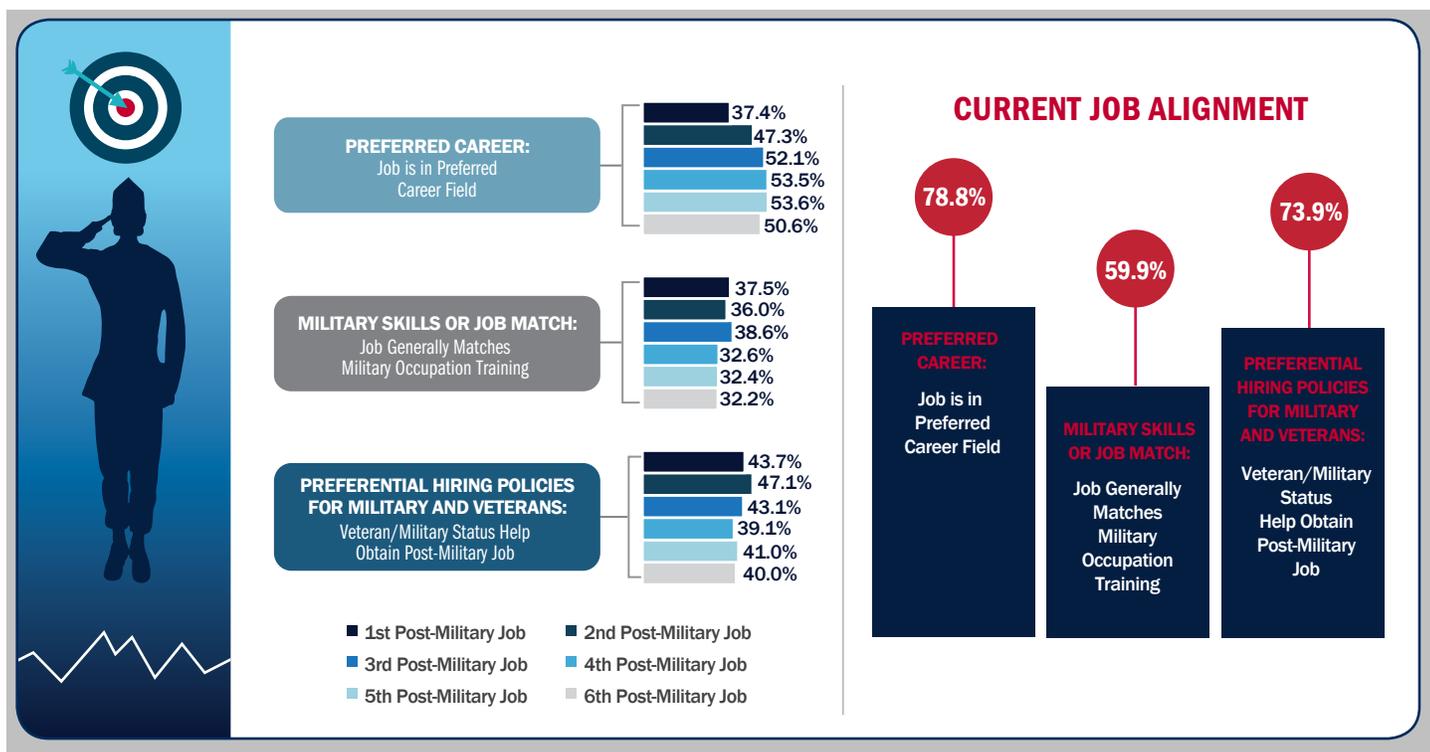
To elaborate further on these findings related to job alignment, Figure 1 presents the results of those that answered “Yes” to these three aforementioned questions. A majority of respondents noted that their current job was also in their preferred career field (74 percent), generally matched their military occupational training (60 percent), and was obtained by a veteran’s hiring preference (79 percent).

A closer examination reveals three subtle, yet noteworthy, trends. First, the data show that with each successive post-military job there is a steady rise in alignment with the preferred career field. In other words, for various reasons (e.g., learning, experience, training and education, trial and error), respondents appear to move closer to finding their desired career paths over time as they move from job to job. Second, and conversely, the data show a slight decline in alignment with prior military occupation with each new

civilian job. This suggests a modest, yet natural, transition away from jobs that closely resemble the types of roles and tasks carried out while in the military. Third, employer preference to hire veterans (explicit or implicit) appears to have a progressively smaller impact with each successive civilian job.

Taken together, the data tell a story that as these respondents entered the civilian workforce, nearly two-thirds found their initial post-service job outside of their preferred career field. This improved, however, with each new civilian job. In addition, slightly more than one-third of the respondents sought out civilian jobs that resembled their work in the military. This only declined further over time as veteran job seekers found jobs increasingly less aligned with the military. Finally, roughly two in five reported a veterans hiring preference making a difference in their hire, though it appears to matter less with each new civilian job.

**Figure 1: Percentage of “Yes” Responses to Key Questions Concerning Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**



## CHANGING EMPLOYERS AND CAREER FIELDS

Respondents were also asked if they were considering changing their employer or career field. Figure 2 presents the relationship between those who expressed an inclination (or not) to leave their place of employment or career field and their corresponding responses on: alignment of their preferred career field, former military occupation, and the helpfulness of their veteran status in obtaining their current job. Figure 2 shows that respondents considering a job or career change (i.e., leaving their current job) are more likely to not be in their desired career field, in a job that matches their prior military work, and in a job in which their veteran's status was a benefit. Clearly, whether an individual indicates they are in their preferred career field is a strong driver in the decision to consider looking for a subsequent job.



**Figure 2: Consideration of Changing Employer or Career Field by Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**

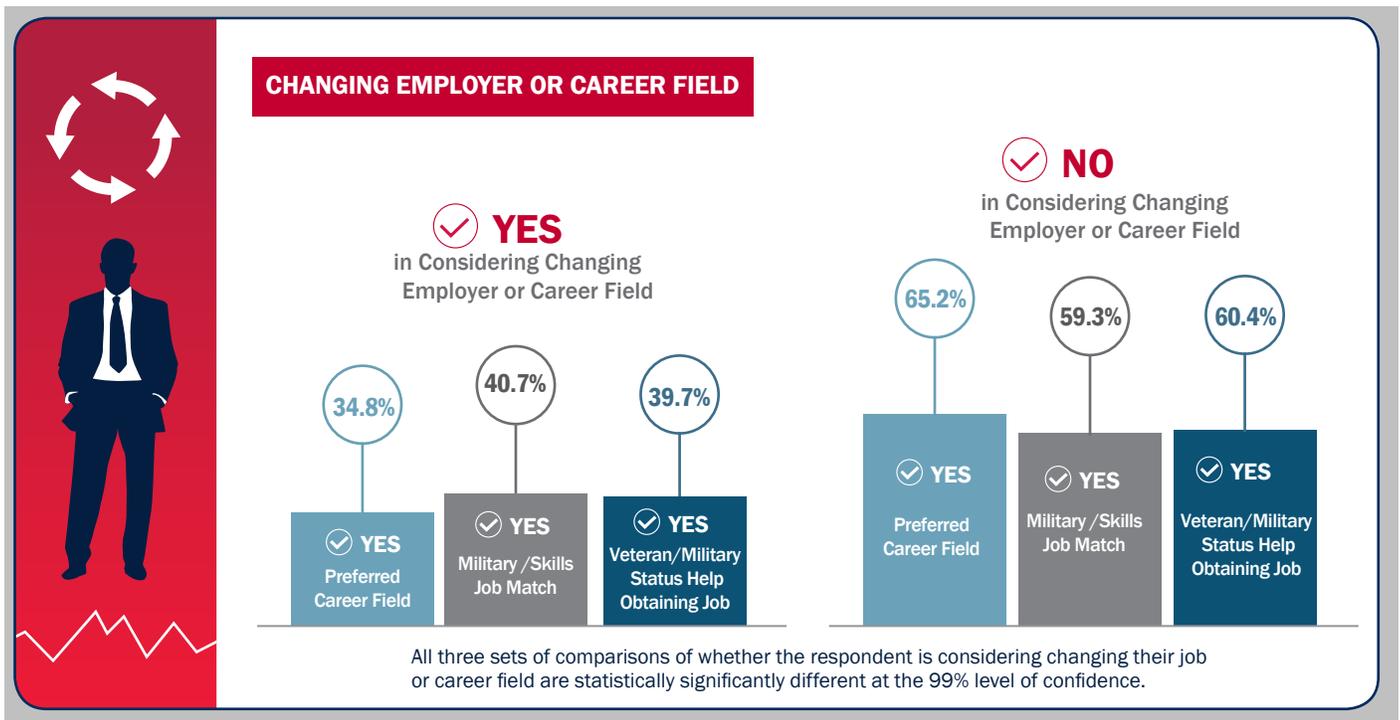


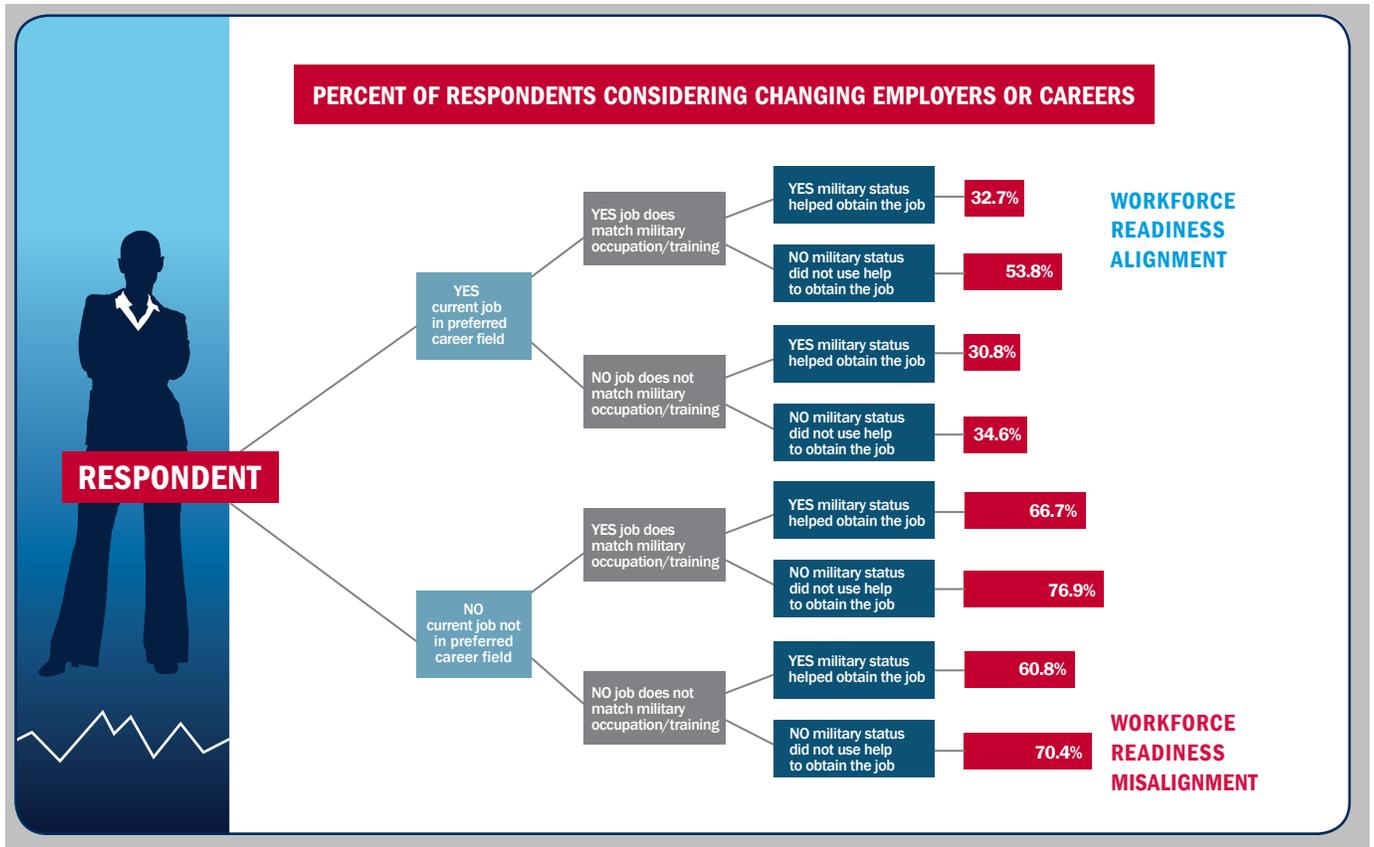
Figure 3 underscores the differences in respondents and presents the percentage of respondents in the labor force who are considering changing employer or career field by the variation in responses to the three key questions. Across the three areas of interest (i.e., preferred career, military skills or job match, and veteran's status), misalignment of current job and preferred career field is associated with the highest inclination to change job or careers. **This suggests that, at least for the participants in this survey, job retention appears to be more about fit within a desired career field than about job matching based on prior military skills or veteran's hiring preference.**

Because it is relevant to hiring, recruiting, and retention, it is notable that the largest response (77 percent) among those considering changing employer or career field occurs when the respondent indicates that their current job is not in their desired career field, does match their prior military occupation, and their veteran status was of

little consequence to getting the job. Behind this, the next highest group of respondents desiring a career change (70 percent) also showed a similar pattern of being misaligned with preferred career field, having inconsequential veteran's status, and no connection to prior military work. As we have suggested in previous papers, employers can achieve the maximum competitive advantage from hiring veterans when they capitalize on the rare, valuable, and differentiating qualities conferred from their military experience.

**These comparisons highlight the importance, not of simply helping veterans find jobs or even jobs that match their prior military skills, but rather finding them the right jobs in, or on the pathway to, their desired careers, capitalizing on their military conferred skills rather than their Military Occupational Specialty directly.** Of course, this hypothetically applies to all job searches, civilian and veteran, though data is not presently available to test this hypothesis for the civilian workforce.

**Figure 3: Changing Employers or Career by Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**

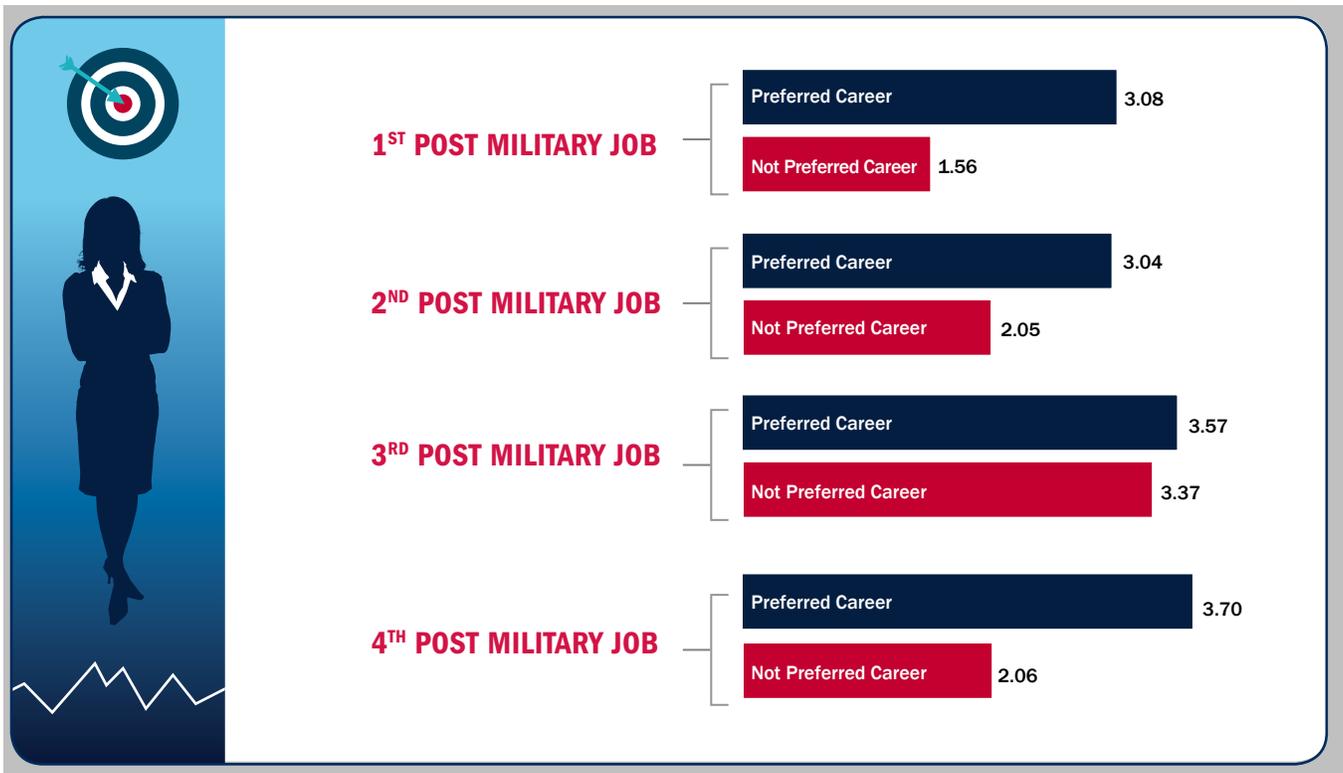


## JOB DURATION

Figure 4 presents the average time spent in the job (up to the fourth post-military job) accounting for whether or not the job was in the respondent's preferred career field. In each case, the average time spent in the job is higher for the respondents who are in their preferred career field versus not in their preferred career field. In the case of the respondents that are in their preferred field, the amount of time spent in the job increases, on average, from the first to the fourth job, with average values above three years across all four jobs. In other words, respondents in a job within their preferred career field exhibit longer job durations, on average, than respondents in a position that is not within preferred career field. In three of the four cases (jobs), the average time spent in the job for respondents in their preferred career field was statistically significantly different and higher than the average time spent in the job for respondents who were not in their preferred career field, with only the third position reflecting a higher, though statistically insignificant difference.



Figure 4. Average Time (Years) Spent in the Job by Preferred Job or Career Field





**Being able to secure a job immediately after separation has been great, as well as the benefits. I would like to have a career in my intended field though”**

**-Navy veteran**



**I'm pursuing education to start my own business."**

**-Army veteran**

Figures 5 and 6 present the job durations associated with the first post-military job of the veteran respondents. Specifically, Figure 5 shows tenure for veterans' first post-service job for three combinations of the "Yes" response to the three questions: (1) Is this job in your preferred career field?, (2) Did this job generally match the occupations you were trained for while you were in the military?, and (3) Did your veteran/military status help you to obtain your current post-military job? Each of these three distributions of job duration in Figure 5 exhibits a tendency toward longer job durations when one or more of these factors are present.

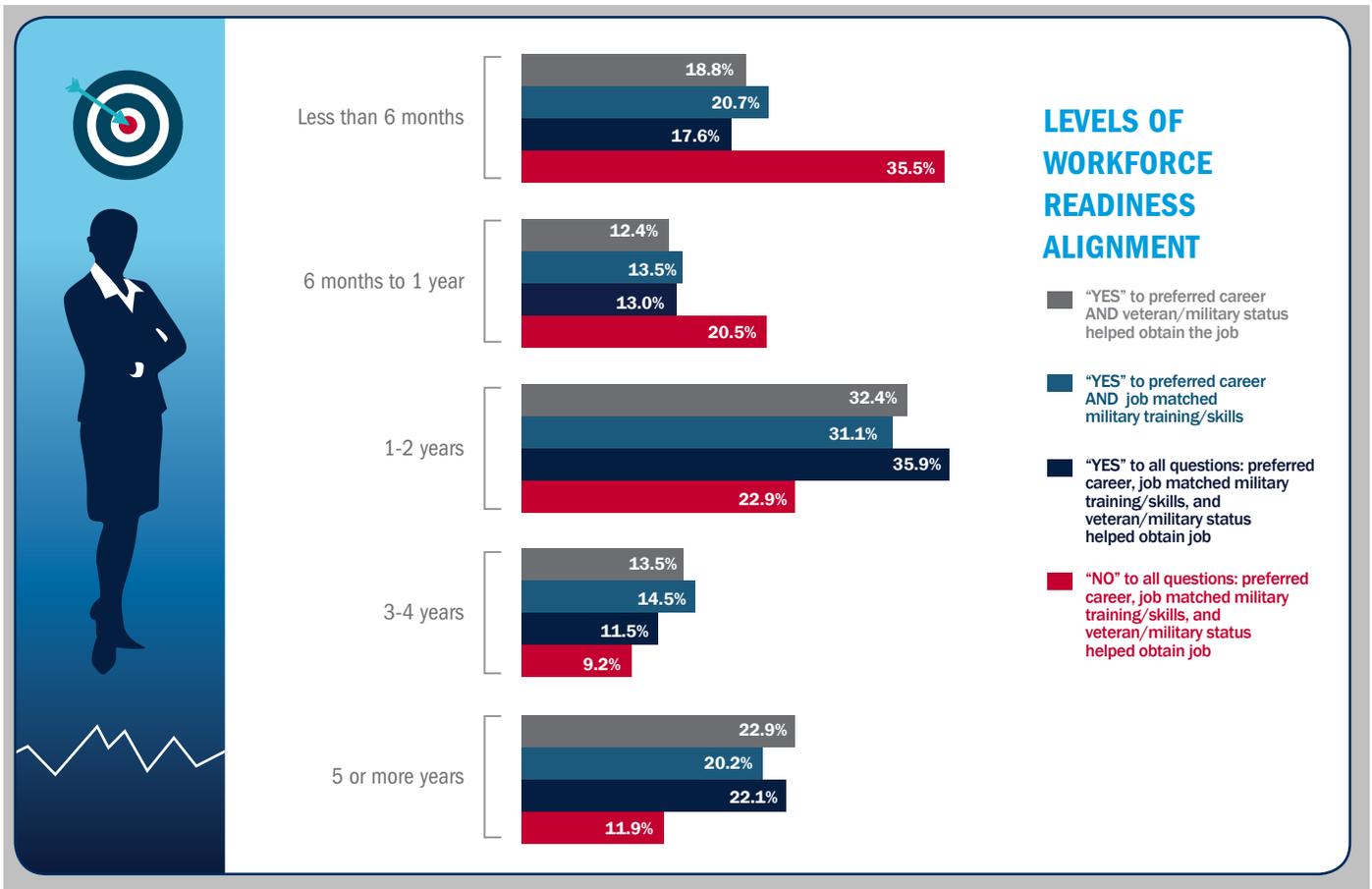
Figure 6 presents the contrasts between the combinations of the "Yes" and "No" responses to the three questions. These distributions of job duration are statistically significantly different from each other. Note in Figure 6 how the distribution for respondents who provided "No" responses to all three questions tends toward shorter job durations while the distribution for respondents who provided "Yes" responses to all three questions tends toward longer job durations.

Both of these figures reflect how a positive response to any one of the three questions increases job tenure in the first civilian job, and magnifies the importance of the veteran's first job search. For example, job seekers do not

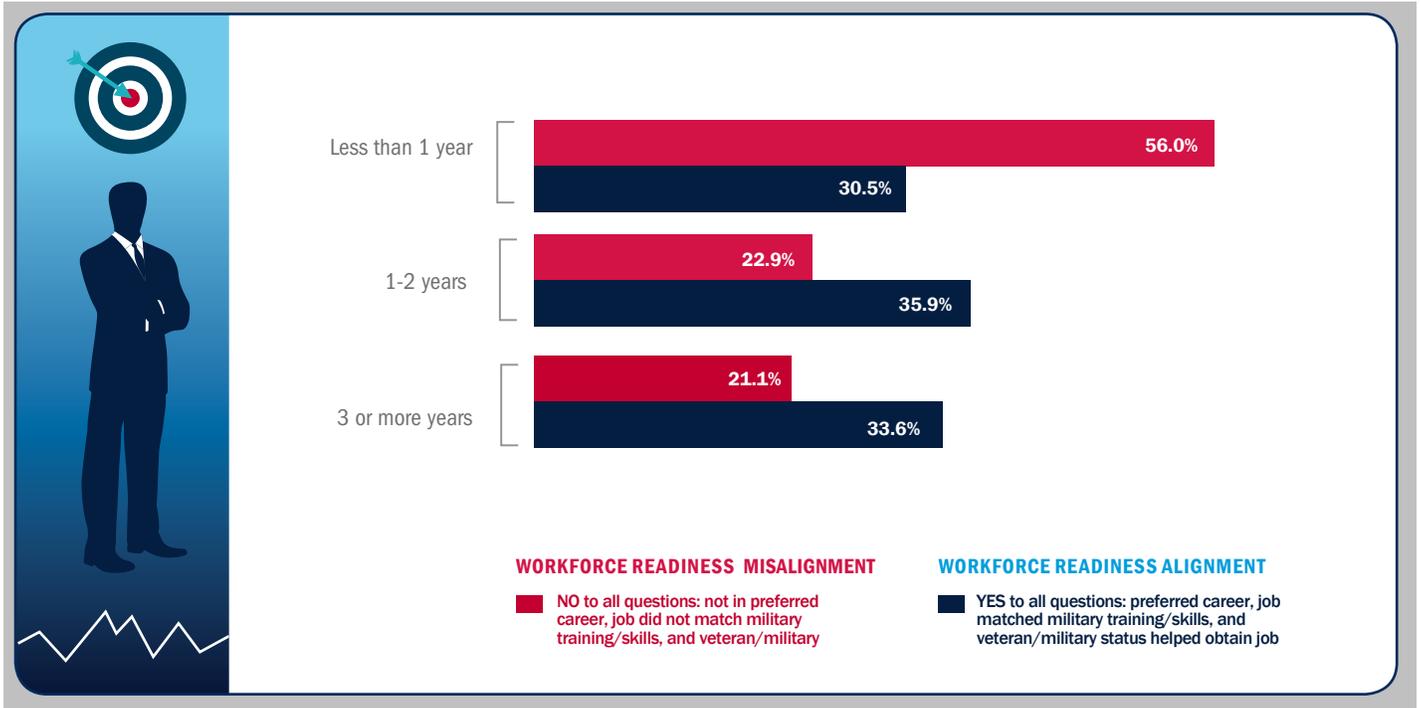
search indefinitely for the ideal job, and one factor that can minimize the time cost of job searching is having accurate market information about the type of jobs in the market and the characteristics of those jobs. Having this information available reduces the adverse impact of job hunting (e.g., loss of income, stress related to uncertainty), reduces time costs, and reduces transaction costs. For transitioning service members who may have limited familiarity with the wide variety of civilian jobs that exist, any program or assistance provided to the veteran in his or her first post-military job search that improves the job alignment and job fit for the first post military job (the likelihood of a "Yes" response to any one of the three aforementioned questions) can potentially facilitate an easier transition from military to civilian life.

In addition, improving job alignment and fit may reduce the time and cost associated with job searching for veterans and potentially reduce hiring costs for employers. Likewise, **a good job fit between employer and employee increases the likelihood of a new hire remaining in the first job for a longer period of time, increases the probability that veteran will have a positive beginning to civilian work life, and arguably enhances the overall quality of life as well as financial readiness for the veteran and their family.**

**Figure 5. First Job Duration by Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**



**Figure 6. First Job Duration by Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**

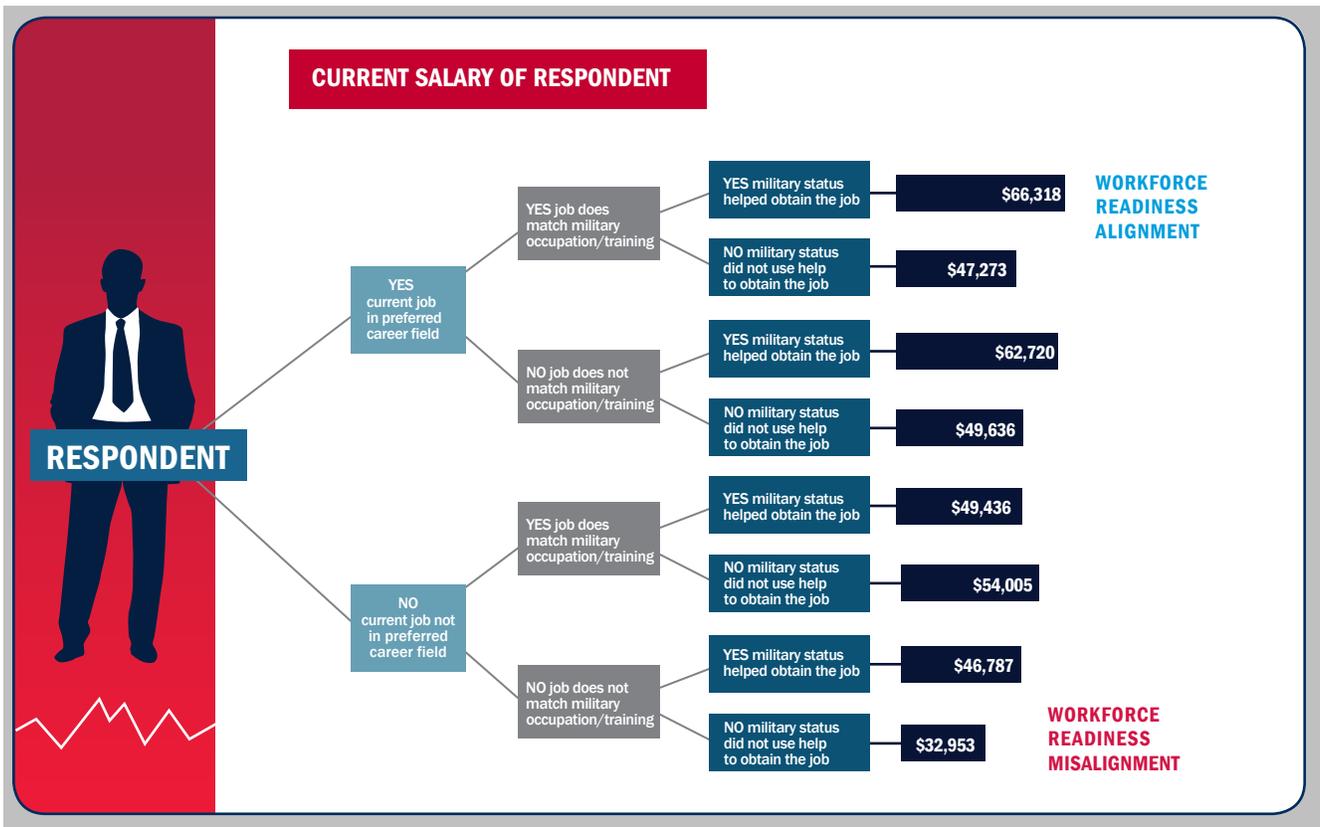


## INCOME

Figure 7 presents the average current salary for respondents who are in the work force organized by the different combinations of “Yes” or “No” responses to the three questions: (1) Is this job in your preferred career field?, (2) Did this job generally match the occupations you were trained for while you were in the military?, and (3) Did your veteran/military status help you to obtain your current post-military job?. As shown in Figure 7, those who are in their preferred career fields exhibit the two highest average current salaries (\$66,318 and \$62,720). The percent difference in the current salary for a “Yes” response for all three questions versus a “No” response on all three questions is over 101 percent. Thus, finding a job positively aligned with at least two of the questions results, on average, in increased compensation for the veteran.



**Figure 7. Current Salary by Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**





**I used my military developed leadership skills in my everyday civilian jobs, even those non-military related” -Army veteran**



**Although totally qualified in administration, prospective employers failed to understand I knew computer programs and more. Decided to take advantage of GI bill and went to school. Found job within one month of graduation”** -Air Force veteran

### **Rank and Education**

Figures 8 and 9 provide a closer look at the salary variation of the different components of the job (specifically career field preference and match to military occupation) by rank and education. In Figure 8, former military officers who are in their preferred career field and in a job that matches their military occupation/training have the highest salary (\$99,873). Officers who are in their preferred career field but who are not in a job that matches their military occupation/training have the second highest salary (\$72,922). Both these salaries are higher when compared to officers who are not in their preferred career field.

The situation differs slightly for former enlisted veterans. Former enlisted veterans in their preferred career field have higher salaries compared to those who are not. But since education can be a mediator to income and since nearly 57 percent of enlisted veterans indicated that they had obtained a Bachelor’s degree or higher at the time of the survey, it is also important to compare the differences by education level. The current salary for those enlisted veterans who indicated having a Bachelor’s degree or higher exceeded the current salary for those enlisted veterans with less than a Bachelor’s degree for most combinations of job components (see Figure 9). The one exception is when the respondent was not in his or her preferred career field but their job matched their military occupation/training (\$44,956 compared to \$51,091). Clearly, matching the veteran’s preferred career field or the veteran’s military occupational training yields significant monetary benefits regardless of education and officer or enlisted status during active duty military service.

Figure 8. Current Salary by Rank: Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference

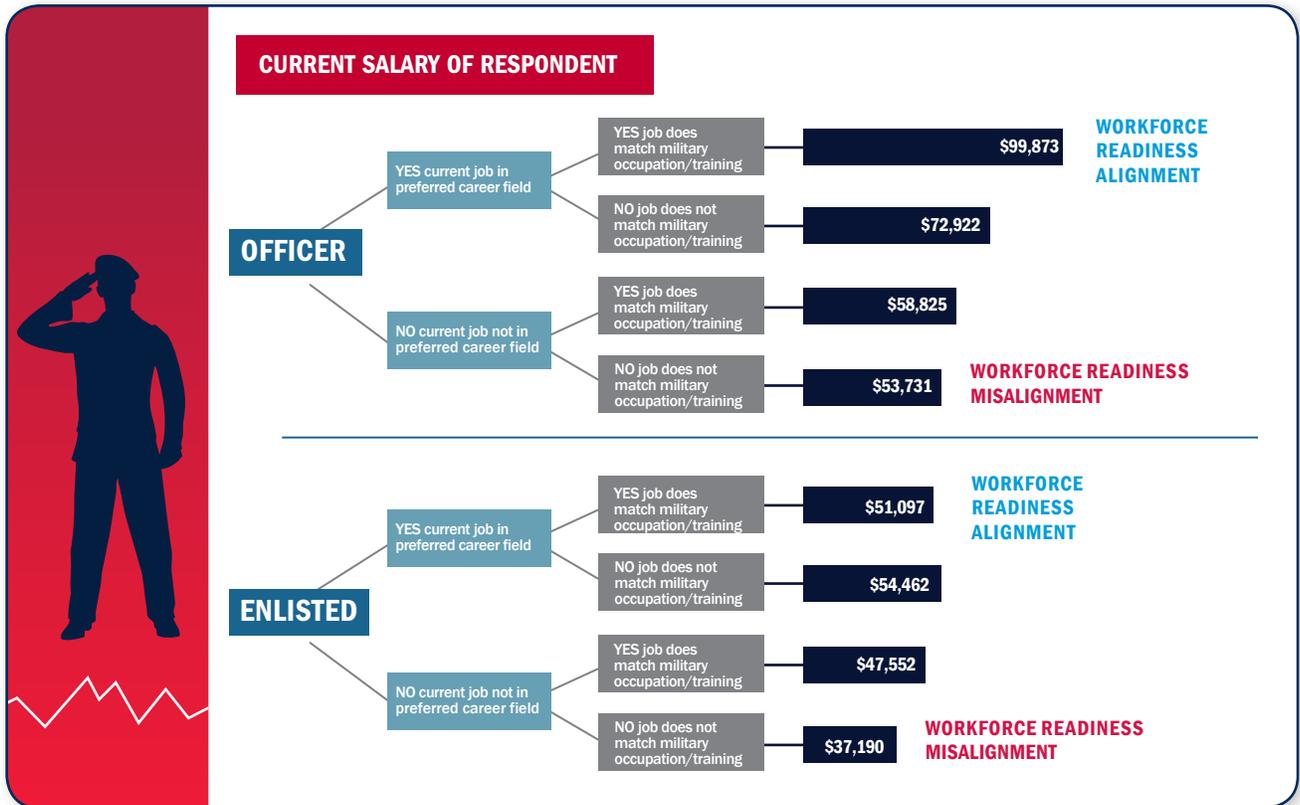
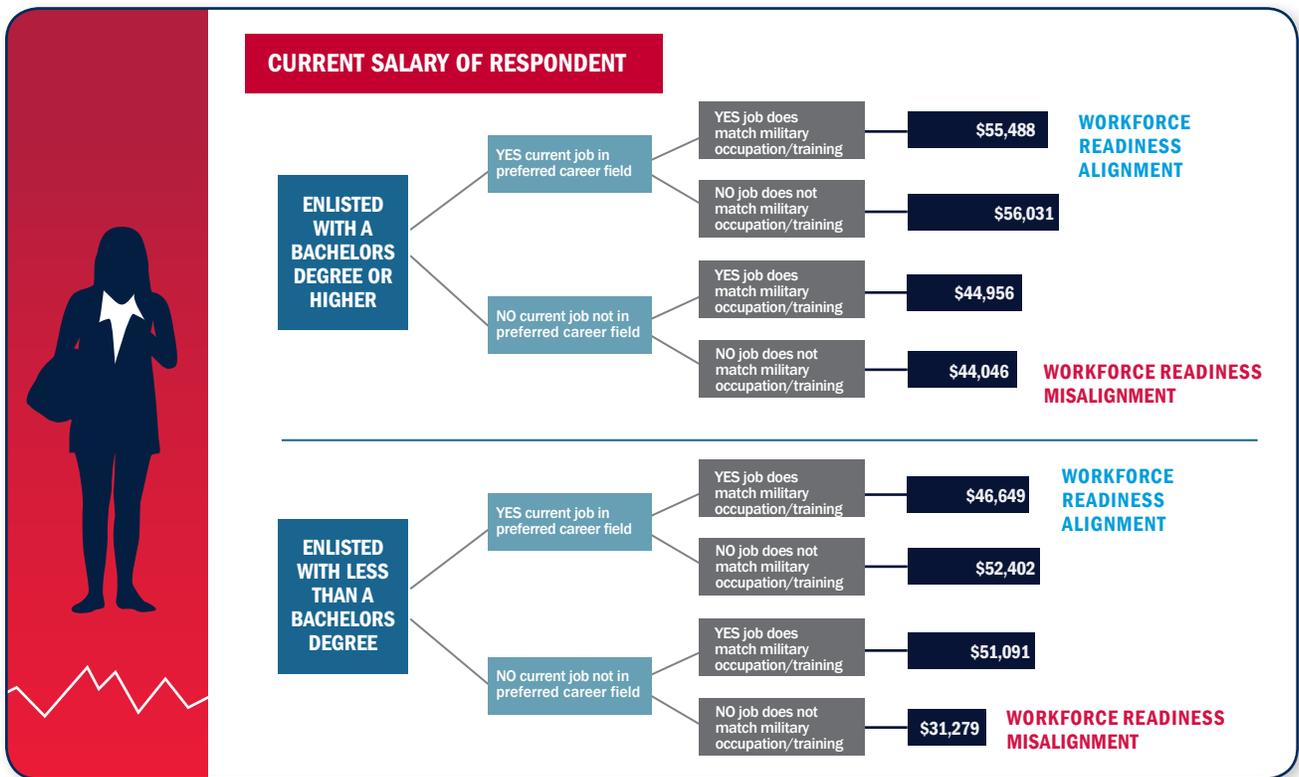


Figure 9. Current Salary by Education: Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference



## VETERAN TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN LIFE

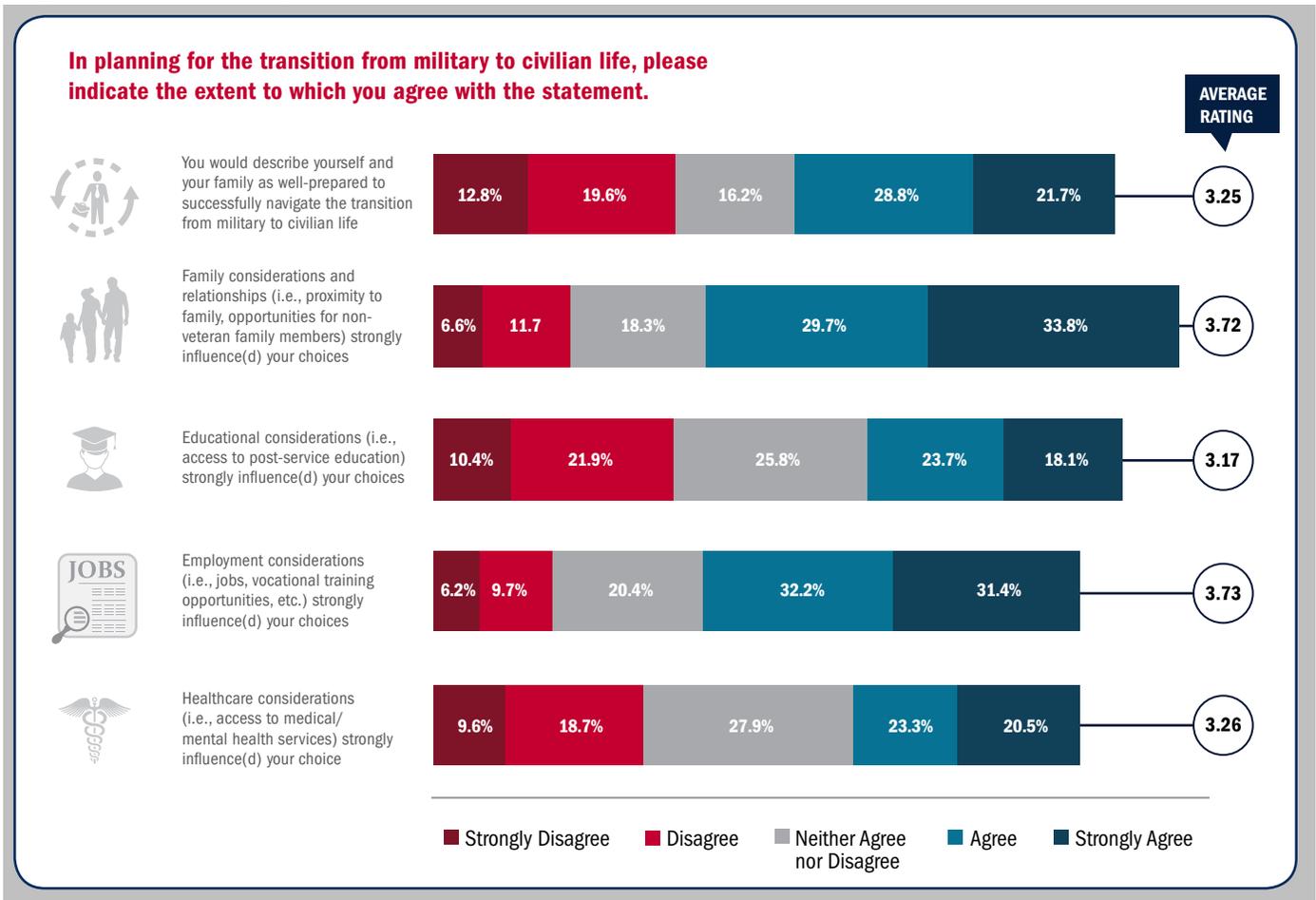
In addition to the three alignment questions, respondents were also asked about their level of preparation for their transition on several key factors (e.g., family, education, employment, and healthcare) that influence their transition choices. These factors were rated on a 5-point Likert agreement scale. Figure 10 presents the percentages and means ratings for these questions. Roughly half, (51 percent) of those surveyed indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with being well-prepared to successfully navigate the transition from military to civilian life while 32 percent indicated that they were not.

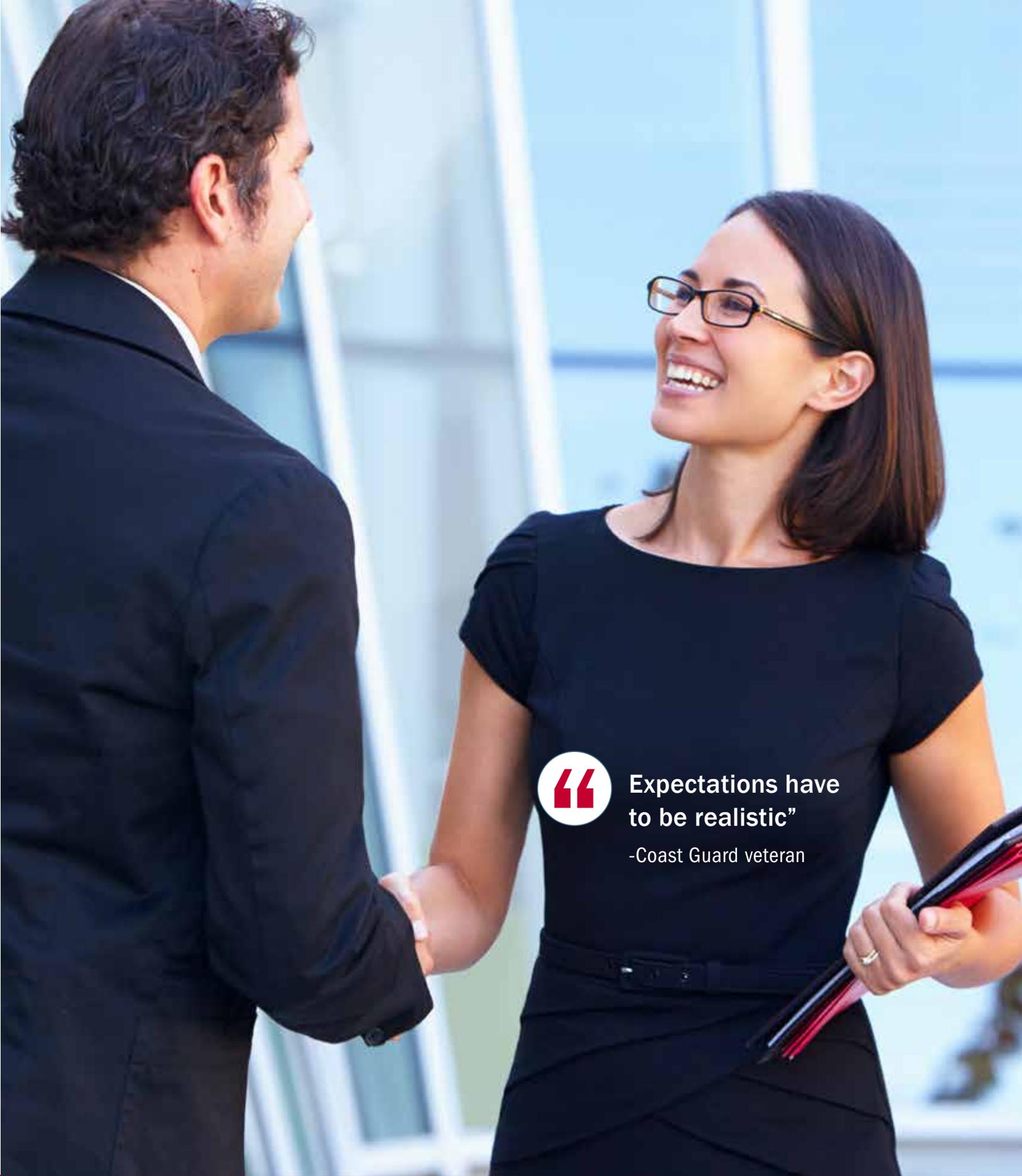
Employment and family considerations were the factors with the highest influence on service members during the transition from military to civilian life.

Key Findings:

- 64 percent of those surveyed indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that employment-related considerations are central to decisions with regard to transition.
- 16 percent disagreed that employment is central to decisions with regard to transition.
- 64 percent of those surveyed indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that family considerations are central to decisions with regard to transition.
- 18 percent disagreed that family is central to decisions with regard to transition.
- 42 percent of respondents indicated that education considerations are primary factor impacting the decision-making process related to the transition from military to civilian life.
- 44 percent indicated that access to healthcare is a central issue impacting their decisions.

**Figure 10. Transition Preparedness and Factors that Influences**





**Expectations have  
to be realistic”**

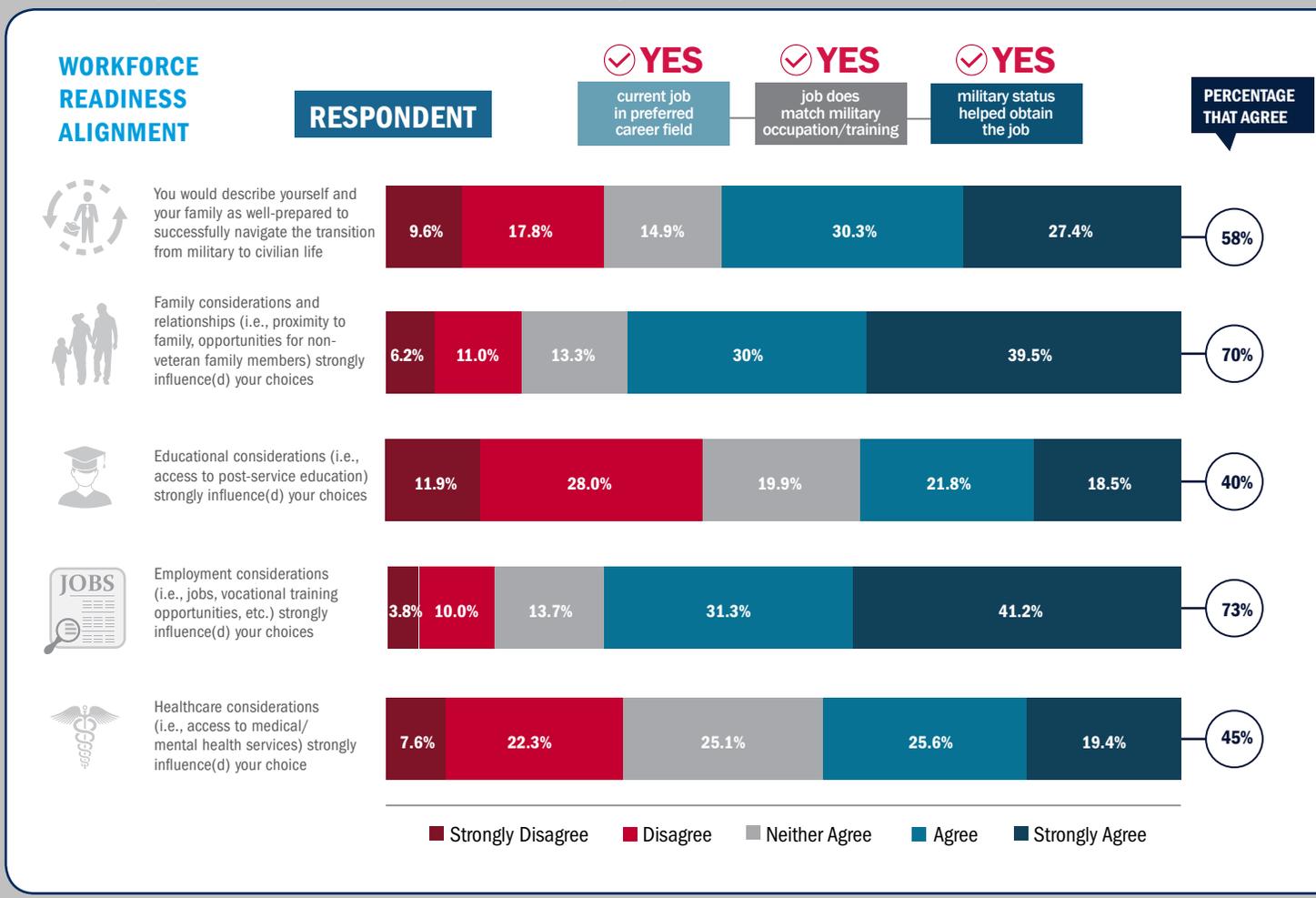
-Coast Guard veteran

Figure 11 presents the transition percentages with the combinations of all the “Yes” and “No” responses to the three questions: (1) Is this job in your preferred career field?, (2) Did this job generally match the occupations you were trained for while you were in the military?, and (3) Did your veteran/military status help you to obtain your current post-military job? For those respondents who responded “Yes” to all three questions, 58 percent of those surveyed indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with being well-prepared to successfully navigate the transition from military to civilian life. This compares to 27 percent that indicated they felt well-prepared when they answered “No” to one or more of the questions (i.e., not in their preferred job, did not match their military training and veteran status did not help obtain the job).

Employment and family considerations had the strongest influence with regard to planning for the transition from military to civilian life. Veterans who answered “Yes” to all three questions had higher agreement percentages compared to those that did not. Notably, 73 percent of those surveyed indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that employment-related considerations are central to decisions concerning transition. Conversely, only 54 percent agreed that employment was central to transition decision making when they did answered “No” to one or more question.

On family matters, approximately 70 percent indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that family considerations are central to transition when they responded “Yes” to all three questions. Only 60 percent agreed that family concerns are central to transition-related decisions when they answered “No” to one or more questions.

**Figure 11. Transition Preparedness and Factors that Influences by Preferred Career, Military Skills or Job Match, and Veterans or Military Preference**



# WORKFORCE READINESS ALIGNMENT



## WORKFORCE READINESS MISALIGNMENT

**RESPONDENT**

**NO** current job in preferred career field  
 **NO** job does match military occupation/training  
 **NO** military status helped obtain the job

**PERCENTAGE THAT AGREE**



You would describe yourself and your family as well-prepared to successfully navigate the transition from military to civilian life



Family considerations and relationships (i.e., proximity to family, opportunities for non-veteran family members) strongly influence(d) your choices



Educational considerations (i.e., access to post-service education) strongly influence(d) your choices



Employment considerations (i.e., jobs, vocational training opportunities, etc.) strongly influence(d) your choices



Healthcare considerations (i.e., access to medical/mental health services) strongly influence(d) your choice



■ Strongly Disagree   
 ■ Disagree   
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree   
 ■ Agree   
 ■ Strongly Agree

## CONCLUSIONS

The discussion presented above emphasizes the relationship between the career aspirations of the veteran, and his or her success securing employment consistent with those aspirations. The research indicates that employment consistent with the veteran's preferred career pathway **improves job retention, extends job duration, and increases personal income**, all of which ostensibly enhance the veteran's and veteran's family's overall quality of life.

The analysis performed for veterans was primarily based on three questions: (1) Is this job in your preferred career field?, (2) Did this job generally match the occupations you were trained for while you were in the military?, and (3) Did your veteran/military status help you to obtain your current post-military job?. The key results from the analysis were:

- **Current Alignment:** When considering the respondents' current jobs, 74 percent of the respondents indicated that their current job was in their preferred career field, 60 percent indicated that their current job matched the occupations for which they were trained while in the military, and 79 percent indicated that their veteran status helped them obtain their current job.
- **Changing Employers or Careers:** Responding "Yes" to any of the three aforementioned questions tends to indicate an increase in the likelihood that the respondent would extend their tenure or stay in their current job. Of the respondents who answered "No" to all three questions regarding job preference, military match, and whether or not veteran status helped obtain their current job, 72 percent indicated that they were considering changing employer or career field.
- **Changing Employers or Careers:** Veterans that indicated that they were not currently in their preferred career field corresponded with a stronger desire (more than 50 percent of this group) to change employer or career field. This highlights how important it is for the veteran to find a job that matches his/her preferred career field.
- **Tenure:** Job tenure of veteran respondents in their preferred career field exceeds, on average, job tenure of veteran respondents in jobs that do not match their preferred career field.
- **Job Duration:** Analysis of job duration reflects how important positive alignment is with the three questions. Positive responses improve the likelihood of a longer job duration for the first job and magnifies the importance of the veteran's first job search.
- **Income:** The percent difference in veterans' average current salaries for three "Yes" responses versus three "No" responses is over 101 percent. Thus, finding a job that results in a "Yes" response to at least two of the three questions results, on average, in increased compensation for the veteran.



- **Transition:** Those that responded "Yes" to all three questions regarding job preference, military match, and whether or not veteran status helped obtain their job, exhibited the highest average rating of being well prepared for transition. Those that responded "No" exhibited the lowest average rating of the transition.

The results demonstrate that when the respondent indicated "Yes" to all three questions then there is workforce readiness alignment. When the respondent indicated "No" to all three questions then there is workforce readiness misalignment. When employers and employees are aligned, there is a resulting increase in job tenure, retention, and personal income. Thus, finding and obtaining a job within one's preferred career field provides positive returns to the veteran, in terms of increased job retention and higher personal income. Job search is an integral part of the labor market, filled with uncertainties. Information concerning existing jobs and job opportunities reduces many of the adverse or restricting aspects of job searches, reduces time costs, and reduces transaction costs.

Job seekers do not search indefinitely for the 'ideal' job, and though the stopping rules are not uniform across job seekers, the one factor that can minimize the time cost of job searching is market information about the type of jobs in the market and the characteristics of those jobs.

Any program or assistance provided to the veteran in his or her job search to improve the likelihood of a "Yes" response to the preferred job question will facilitate an easier transition from military to civilian life, thus reducing the time cost associated with job search, increasing the likelihood of remaining in the job for a longer time period, and enhancing the overall quality of life for the veteran and his or family.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of the match between veteran job seekers and employers. When this alignment exists, it improves retention, which benefits both employers and employees. Conversely, when there is misalignment, employees are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere. It is therefore beneficial to both parties to find alignment at the onset of the hiring process or identify the path to go from “what is” that matches current experience and skill toward “what’s wanted” which may require a path, additional experience, and potentially training or learning. In light of these findings we make the following recommendations to employers and veteran job seekers.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- ✓ Adopt an individualized approach to hiring transitioning military and veterans.
- ✓ Take time to understand each employee's personal and professional goals within the organization.
- ✓ Enable a customized plan to help individual employees succeed in the workplace and take ownership in their career advancement.
- ✓ Hire based on skillsets rather than exclusively on specific specialty areas (e.g., MOS).
- ✓ Following a hire, capitalize on veteran employees existing strengths by placing them in roles, delegating responsibilities, or giving assignments that signal the value that they bring to the company.
- ✓ Utilize mentorship and peer mentoring programs that can help veteran employees learn about opportunities within a company that will best align with their skillsets and personal career goals.
  - Capitalize on existing veteran employees as mentors.
  - Create and encourage formal and informal peer networks and military affinity groups.
  - Offer opportunities for military affiliated employees to self-identify as veterans and visibly award high performing veteran employees.
- ✓ Publicize and visibly demonstrate your company's commitment to veteran hiring, including:
  - In social media and on website.
  - In position descriptions.
- ✓ Ensure that hiring managers, human resource professionals, and other employees involved with the hiring process are trained on military cultural competence in order to best understand military candidates and new veteran hires.
  - This includes: how to understand prior military experience, military training and how it translates to civilian employment, and how to leverage military benefits for employees seeking additional education, certifications, or other credentials. It also includes ensuring that all employees—top-to-bottom—know the company's commitment to military hiring.
- ✓ Understand that veterans may be transitioning from their military career either to continue with similar work in the civilian sector or they may be embarking on an entirely new career. Where possible, take advantage of federal resources like the Department of Labor's O\*NET and other firms with veteran hiring initiatives to capture leading practices and developing tools that help veterans identify and translate their skills that apply to advertised positions.
- ✓ Consider how your position descriptions are written, and if they are appropriate for attracting veteran candidates. When possible, add “or relevant military experience” to job requirements to call out your commitment to opening up the conversation for transitioning skills.
- ✓ Identify the population of transitioning veterans and create programs to close their business acumen gaps.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VETERAN JOB SEEKERS

- ✓ When possible, utilize educational benefits prior to transition, particularly if you intend to work in a position distinct from your work in the military.
- ✓ Leverage available mentorship, internship, and on-the-job training programs wherever possible in order to gain exposure to available positions, educational opportunities, and chances to gain job experience in civilian settings; participate in peer networking programs, before, during, and after transition to better understand how to take advantage of opportunities for advancement, certification, or training.
- ✓ Take advantage of career readiness opportunities offered by the service branches, the DoD, and the VA prior to retirement or separation as well as those offered by community, state, local nonprofits, and universities, as well as corporate programs.
- ✓ Prior to military transition, talk to veterans who have successfully transitioned to identify positions, industries, and companies of interest. LinkedIn veteran groups can be a tremendous avenue for information and networking.
- ✓ Prior to military transition, proactively seek information from veteran peers who have successfully transitioned to learn about veteran retention efforts of various employers, including use of military conferred skills after time of hire.
- ✓ During transition, focus on applying to companies who have openly and visibly demonstrated their intent and interest in hiring veterans.
- ✓ Prior to transition, prioritize translating military experience into civilian terminology specific to relevant positions. Read position descriptions carefully and tailor job applications with strong consideration given to demonstrating how prior experience is applicable. It is acceptable to utilize the wording in company requisitions to translate your military skills on your resume.
- ✓ Recognize that transition from the military may be a process rather than an event. Jobs obtained directly after transition may be temporary, serving as opportunities to gain relevant job experience, get exposure to new positions, companies, and industries, or more clearly define personal employment goals.
- ✓ Remember that the transition out of the military was not your first transition. You successfully transitioned into the military before you had the level of maturity and experience with which you are exiting the military.



# WORKFORCE READINESS RESOURCES

The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act of 2011 requires that 100 percent of eligible separating service members receive updated transition assistance services. This service entitled Transition GPS includes information about job-seeking tools, military skills translation, educational opportunities, and use of benefits such as the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Additional elements include information about entrepreneurship, credentialing opportunities, and financial readiness. Related efforts to improve workforce readiness have included increased reciprocity of licensure for high demand occupational areas (e.g., aircraft mechanics, automotive mechanics, emergency medical technicians, and licensed practical nurses).<sup>25</sup> There is an existing network of workforce readiness assets directed toward the military already in place which range from services, to legal remedies, policies, as well as funding support in the form of tax incentives, and grant funding. Some of those efforts are listed below. Note: this list is not all inclusive nor does we endorse any one program. There are many other helpful resources for both veterans and employers that are not listed here.

## Department of Chamber of Commerce

- ★ **Hiring our Heroes**, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, launched in March 2011 as a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities.

## Department of Defense (DoD):

- ★ **Transition GPS**. The DoD's updated five-day workshop focuses on transition from military service to civilian life and includes information about job-seeking tools, military skills translation, educational opportunities, use of benefits such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and information about entrepreneurship, credentialing opportunities, and financial readiness.
- ★ **SkillBridge**: Service members meeting certain qualifications can participate in civilian job and employment training, including apprenticeships and internships. Training can take place starting up to six months prior to a service member's separation, and must offer a high probability of employment and be provided to the service member at little or no cost.

## The Department of Labor (DOL):

- ★ **Hero 2 Hired (H2H)**, now merged with the **Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Employment Center (VEC)**, is a comprehensive employment program that offers everything a Reserve Component job seeker needs to find their next opportunity, including job listings, career exploration tools, education and training resources.
- ★ **O-Net**: Occupational codes in O-Net can be used to conduct a military-occupational code (MOC) crosswalk based on jobs filled while serving in the military. The crosswalk is intended to identify civilian jobs that correspond to various military roles as well as occupational outlook, necessary education, licensures, credentials, and salary information.
- ★ **My Next Move for Veterans** is an O-Net based search engine, intended to help users link prior military experience (branch of service and military occupation code or title) to pertinent information needed to explore civilian careers and related training, including information to write resumes that highlight relevant civilian skills.

- ★ **The Gold Card Initiative** is a joint effort of the **Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA)** and the **Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)**. Provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with intensive needed to succeed in today's job market.

## Department of Veterans Affairs (VA):

- ★ **Montgomery and Post-9/11 GI Bill** Provide funds for educational costs (and some living expenses) for eligible veterans and for eligible spouses and family members.
- ★ **Veteran Employment Centers (VEC)** provide critical paths to employment through their workforce development programs and services connected at the state level through American Job Centers and online through vet.gov. VEC provides a one year job seeker account to LinkedIn and access to 800 free Coursera online courses as well as an online location for job seekers and employers to connect.
- ★ **Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO)** is a program management office within the VA that offers various programs and services for career exploration in Veterans Affairs and, more widely, across the federal government.
- ★ **VAs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)** services includes their Education and Career Counseling Program which allows service members and veterans to get personalized counseling and support to help guide their career paths and encourage the most effective use of their VA benefits and assistance with job training, employment accommodations, resume development, and job seeking skills coaching. Other services may be provided to assist Veterans in starting their own businesses or independent living services for those who are severely disabled and unable to work in traditional employment.

## Small Business Administration (SBA):

- ★ Offers a variety of resources to veteran's interested in small business ownership and entrepreneurship including information about financing for Veteran-Owned Businesses, loan and grant information including states and organizations who provide loans to veterans, access to training, counseling and assistance, business resources for people with disabilities including service-disabled veterans. SBA offers Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) with 18 regional affiliated Veteran Business Outreach Centers (VBOC) offering targeted services to veterans including business plan development and mentoring. (such as Boots to Business, EBV, Reboot, V-Wise). To learn more visit the **Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD)**.

## Non-Governmental Resources:

- ★ **USAA** offers a general set of tools and advice for separating service members, including but not limited to employment and financial tools. USAA's resources also include a customizable Military Separation Checklist, active duty retirement information, and insurance calculators.
- ★ **JPMC** co-founded the Veteran Jobs Mission in 2011, now a coalition of over 200 companies committed to the professional development and employment of veterans. The coalition has honed their focus on retention and career development for veterans in the private sector, including on-boarding training programs, establishing sponsorship programs, and highlighting industry-specific best practices.
- ★ **GI Jobs** is an online tool for veterans interested in employment, education, and entrepreneurship. GI Jobs offers articles and information related to career exploration and post-secondary education options, and tools for resume building, application writing, and interviewing.
- ★ **LinkedIn for Vets** provides information on job openings and helping you appear in search results when potential employers are seeking out people with your skillset. LinkedIn provides a free 1-year Job Seeker Premium subscription and courses at Lynda.com to all U.S. Veterans and Service Members

- ★ **Deloitte's Career Opportunity Redefinition and Exploration (CORE) Leadership Program** is an initiative aimed at doubling veteran hiring numbers by helping veterans translate their skills to a business environment. It is a part of the White House's Joining Forces Initiative and provides an Open House for Veterans to learn skills and meet Deloitte professionals to help them transition.

- ★ **Veteran Recruiting** is a division of Astound Virtual, a company specializing in online recruitment solutions. VR operates a virtual recruitment center through which employers can recruit veteran applicants more efficiently and effectively. Veteran applicants can job-search, attend virtual career fairs, and host resumes on VR's website.
- ★ **Onward to Opportunity (O2O)** is offered on U.S. military installations across the country, providing in-demand, industry-validated training to transitioning service members, all Guard and Reserve, and active duty spouses who are navigating the transition to civilian employment.

## Ernst and Young

- ★ **Veterans Network** provides a professional resource network created by Veterans at EY to connect with each other and provide support to one another. Among other things, the Veterans Network is able to provide a peer mentorship program to help Veterans transition to new roles or gain professional development.
- ★ **HonoVet.org** provides career mentoring to Veterans looking to improve their interview and business skills as they transition to a corporate environment.
- ★ **Prudential VETalent** is program built with Workforce Development Services (WOS) to assist Veterans transition into the workplace. Graduates of the program receive marketable credentials and help in finding job placement.
- ★ **Walmart's Veterans Welcome Home Commitment** hopes to hire 250,000 veterans in Walmart and Sam's Club. It guarantees a job at Walmart for any Veteran Honorably discharged after Memorial Day 2013. Additionally, it provides military skills matching and transitioning timelines. In Walmart, provides a unique "find your fit" tool that helps service members find the Retail and Logistics job best suited for them.

- ★ **The Veterans Career Transition Program (VCTP)** at IVMF, offered with grant support from JP Morgan Chase & Co., offers free online education and training programs to post-9/11 veterans, their spouses, transitioning active duty service members, and spouses of active duty military. VCTP is focused on preparing transitioning service members and spouses for their careers in operations, HR or IT. Participants develop skills to effectively prepare for and execute job searches, including company research, resume and cover letter writing, and a foundation to advanced level courses in Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Annual Average 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2007). VetPop 2007 Data, Table 2S: Separations by State, Period, Age Group, Gender 2000-2036. Estimated years 2016-2020.
- <sup>3</sup> The U.S. Department of Defense reported 24.8 percent of active duty separations in 2014 were involuntary (n =50,697). U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy), 2014 Profile of the Military Community. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Defense (2014). Demographic Profile of the Military Community. Retrieved from, <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> See Hall, K; Harrell, M.; Bicksler, B.; Stewart, R.; Fisher, M. (2014). Veteran Employment Lessons from the 100,000 Jobs Mission. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.; Harrell, M & Berglass, N. (2012). Employing America's Veterans Perspectives from Businesses. Center for a New American Security
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Annual Average 2015
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2007). VetPop 2007 Data, Table 2S: Separations by State, Period, Age Group, Gender 2000-2036. Estimated years 2016-2020.
- <sup>8</sup> IVMF (November 2015). The Employment Situation of Veterans October 2015. Retrieved at [http://vets.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/IVMF\\_Employment-Situation-for-Oct-2015.pdf](http://vets.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/IVMF_Employment-Situation-for-Oct-2015.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, biggest gap is population 20-24 see Figure 3
- <sup>10</sup> Kleykamp, M. (2013). Unemployment, earnings, and enrollment among post 9/11 veterans. *Social Science Research*, (2013); 42, 836-851.
- <sup>11</sup> U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015, March 18). Employment Situation of Veterans – 2014. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.nr0.htm>
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Routon, P.W. (2014). The Effect of 21st Century Military Service on Civilian Labor and Educational Outcomes. *Journal of Labor Research*, 35(1), 15-38
- <sup>15</sup> See Allen, P., Billings, L., Green, A., Lujan, J., & Armstrong, M. L. (2012). Returning Enlisted Veterans–Upward (to) Professional Nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 28, 241-246.; Davis, L. L., Leon, A. C., Toscano, R., Drebing, C. E., Ward, C., Parker, P. E., Kashner, M., & Drake, R. E. (2012). A randomized controlled trial of supported employment among veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Psychiatric Services*, 63(5), 464-470.
- <sup>16</sup> Hall, K; Harrell, M.; Bicksler, B.; Stewart, R.; Fisher, M. (2014). Veteran Employment Lessons from the 100,000 Jobs Mission. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.
- <sup>17</sup> Johnson, T. (2015). Service after Serving: Does Veterans' Preference Diminish the Quality of the US Federal Service? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 25 (3), 669-696.
- <sup>18</sup> See Institute for Veterans and Military Families. (2012). The Business Case for hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés. Institute for Veterans and Military Families; Hall, K; Harrell, M.; Bicksler, B.; Stewart, R.; Fisher, M. (2014). Veteran Employment Lessons from the 100,000 Jobs Mission. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.; Harrell, M & Berglass, N. (2012). Employing America's Veterans Perspectives from Businesses. Center for a New American Security.
- <sup>19</sup> See Hall, K; Harrell, M.; Bicksler, B.; Stewart, R.; Fisher, M. (2014). Veteran Employment Lessons from the 100,000 Jobs Mission. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.; Harrell, M & Berglass, N. (2012). Employing America's Veterans Perspectives from Businesses. Center for a New American Security
- <sup>20</sup> See Rudstam, H., Strobel, W., & Cook. L. (2012). Beyond yellow ribbons: Are employers prepared to hire, accommodate and retain returning veterans with disabilities? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 36(2), 87-95.; Thom, K. & Bassuk, E. (2012). Chicagoland female veterans: A qualitative study on attachment to the labor force. Retrieved from <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/media/391.pdf>
- <sup>21</sup> Maury, R. & Stone, B (2014). Veteran Job Retention Survey: Summary. Institute for Veterans and Military Families.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Casner-Lotto, J., & Barrington, L. (2006). Are they really ready to work? Unites States: The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21st Century Skills and Society for Human Resource Management.
- <sup>24</sup> The Fast Track to Civilian Employment: Streamlining Credentialing and Licensing for Service Members, Veterans, and Their Spouses. (2013). Executive Office of The President. Accessed at [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/military\\_credentiaing\\_and\\_licensing\\_report\\_2-24-2013\\_final.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/military_credentiaing_and_licensing_report_2-24-2013_final.pdf)

## APPENDIX

When looking closer at the average ratings for the question, “Describe yourself and your family as well-prepared to successfully navigate the transition from military to civilian life.” (5-point Likert agreement scale) the average agreement ratings are statistically significantly for a variety of different demographics and service characteristics (see Table 3). Specifically, there were statistically significant differences between those that were married, those that have obtained a Bachelor’s Degree or higher, those that currently live in a metropolitan area, and those that are 65 years or older. In terms of service, there were statistically significant differences between officers versus enlisted veterans, those that were in the Air Force, and years of service.

When comparing those that answered all “Yes” and all “No” to the three key questions, the average agreement ratings are statistically significantly different. The combination of “Yes,” my current job is in my preferred career field, and “Yes,” my current job matches my military occupational training exhibits the highest average rating, 3.66875. The combination comprised of “No” responses for all three questions exhibits the lowest average rating, 2.63333.

**Table 3. Approval Rating for Veterans by Demographic Groups**

### TOTAL VETERAN RESPONDENT SAMPLE

Average Rating 3.25031

Median Rating 4

| DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP         | AVERAGE               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Officer Status            | 3.46988**             |
| Warrant Officer Status    | 4.11765 <sup>SS</sup> |
| Enlisted Status           | 3.17014**             |
| Male                      | 3.25446               |
| Female                    | 3.19200               |
| With Children Under 18    | 3.17483               |
| Without Children Under 18 | 3.29174               |
| Not Married               | 2.98881               |
| Married                   | 3.38033*              |
| Caucasian                 | 3.27100               |
| African American          | 3.12500               |
| Hispanic                  | 3.25000               |
| Asian                     | 3.13333 <sup>SS</sup> |
| American Indian           | 3.16667 <sup>SS</sup> |
| Bachelor's Degree or More | 3.34864**             |
| Bachelor's Degree         | 3.27803               |
| Master's Degree           | 3.43678***            |
| Doctor's Degree           | 3.35714 <sup>SS</sup> |
| Professional Degree       | 3.69388**             |
| Region 1 - Northeast      | 3.06122               |
| Region 2 - South          | 3.36806               |
| Region 3 - Midwest        | 3.32249               |
| Region 4 - West           | 3.12376               |

| DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP   | AVERAGE               |
|---|-----------------------|
| Large Metropolitan Area (over 500,000)  | 3.37606***            |
| Large city (250,000 - 500,000)  | 3.29518               |
| Age 22 to 34  | 3.21088               |
| Age 35 to 44  | 3.01389               |
| Age 45 to 54  | 3.27941               |
| Age 55 to 64  | 3.30612               |
| Age 65 plus   | 3.66197*              |
| Army  | 3.20541               |
| Navy  | 3.16049               |
| Air Force   | 3.39810***            |
| Marine Corps  | 3.14737               |
| Coast Guard   | 3.36842 <sup>SS</sup> |
| National Guard  | 3.40000               |
| 10 or Less Years of Service   | 3.15680***            |
| More Than 10 and Less Than 20 Years of Service  | 2.91954**             |
| 20 or more Years of Service   | 3.40837*              |
| Current Job - Preferred Job   | 3.47945*              |
| Current Job - Matches Military Occupational Training  | 3.60591*              |
| Current Job - Military Status Helped Obtain Current Job   | 3.40391**             |
| Current Job - Preferred Job and Matches Military Occupational Training  | 3.66875*              |
| Current Job - Preferred Job and Military Status Helped Obtain Current Job   | 3.50725*              |
| Current Job - Preferred Job and Matches Military Occupational Training and Military Status Helped Obtain Current Job                  | 3.59091*              |
| Current Job - Not Preferred Job and Does Not Match Military Occupational Training and Military Status Did Not Help Obtain Current Job | 2.63333*              |

\* Statistically Significant at the 99 percent or more level of confidence

\*\* Statistically Significant at the 95 percent but less than 99 percent level of confidence

\*\*\* Statistically Significant at the 90 percent but less than 95 percent level of confidence

<sup>SS</sup> Small Sample

## ABOUT THE WORKFORCE READINESS BRIEFS

Upon military separation, veterans often enter the civilian workforce to either extend their career in a similar civilian role or embark on an entirely new and unrelated career path. The **Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)**, as part of its broader employment research series, and with the generous financial support and collaboration of **USAA**, is exploring the topic of workforce readiness as it relates to transitioning service members and veterans in the civilian labor force. This paper marks the second in a series of short **Workforce Readiness Briefs** that will cover several related topics such as:

- understanding how the concept of workforce readiness applies to transitioning service members and veterans;
- examining interactions between career preferences, job matching, performance, and retention;
- exploring the links between financial readiness, spouse employment, and workforce readiness; and
- employer perspectives on workforce readiness and key factors and practices that influence retention and job satisfaction among veteran employees



## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES (IVMF)

The IVMF is the first interdisciplinary national institute in higher education focused on the social, economic, education, and policy issues impacting veterans and their families post-service. Through the focus on veterans programming, research and policy, employment and employer support, and community engagement, the Institute provides in depth analysis of the challenges facing the veteran community, captures best practices, and serves as a forum to facilitate new partnerships and strong relationships between the individuals and organizations committed to making a difference for veterans and military families.



## ABOUT USAA

The USAA family of companies provides insurance, banking, investments, retirement products and advice to 11.2 million current and former members of the U.S. military and their families. Known for its legendary commitment to its members, USAA is consistently recognized for outstanding service, employee well-being and financial strength. USAA membership is open to all who are serving our nation in the U.S. military or have received a discharge type of Honorable—and their eligible family members. Founded in 1922, USAA is headquartered in San Antonio. For more information about USAA, follow us on **Facebook** or **Twitter (@USAA)**, or visit **usaa.com**.

# STAY IN TOUCH

---



p 315.443.0141  
f 315.443.0312  
e [vets@syr.edu](mailto:vets@syr.edu)  
w [vets.syr.edu](http://vets.syr.edu)



[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [+](#)  
IVMFSyracuseU



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
**INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS  
AND MILITARY FAMILIES**  
JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner