



# WORK AFTER SERVICE:

## Developing Workforce Readiness and Veteran Talent for the Future

### Overview

For decades, military recruiters have encouraged young Americans to serve as a means to get ahead in life. Many young Americans have heeded the call. Through the promise of meaningful work experience and educational opportunities, the all-volunteer force remains a national workforce readiness institution. And as service members leave the military, a natural choice and career progression is to pursue and compete for employment in the civilian job market.

For transitioning service members and veterans, workforce readiness should be viewed as an interaction between:

- what a veteran brings to the civilian workplace in knowledge, skills, and abilities,
- what employers put in place to understand, attract, and develop veteran talent in their workforce,
- and what key public and private sector stakeholders do—in partnership—to prepare veterans for civilian employment, educate employers on the nuances veteran hiring and retention, and create pathways to employment in key growth industries (see figure on next page).

While the veteran needs certain baseline skills to enter the workforce, the employer also must set the conditions to enable that veteran to succeed. Both parties play a part in the ultimate success of a hire. We argue that a tailored model of workforce readiness, with supportive public-private partnerships, will most effectively assist service members as they transition. These same efforts also support employers in securing a sustainable pipeline of veteran talent.

### Workforce Readiness Recommendations

#### VETERAN

- Maximize educational benefits (including opportunities to obtain industry recognized certifications and licenses)
- Learn more about specific industries and jobs by making use of existing state and federal resources that are tailored to the military such as O-Net, industry competency models, and military occupational code (MOC) crosswalk

#### FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT

- DoD should identify earlier points in the military lifecycle to introduce service members to federal and state resources (e.g., O-Net, industry competency models, etc.); this requires leadership support and a cultural change that shifts the focus of workforce readiness planning to earlier stages (and perhaps multiple stages) of the military lifecycle versus primarily during transition
- Identify experience and education gaps, and geographical considerations that may influence career decisions, but could be introduced earlier in the military lifecycle; existing federal and state resources such as O-Net and the related Competency Model Clearinghouse are robust and offer a variety of ways for veterans to explore their interests
- States should minimize barriers and streamline procedures to obtain industry certifications and licensures to enable transitioning military a more direct pathway to employment and competitive compensation



## EMPLOYER

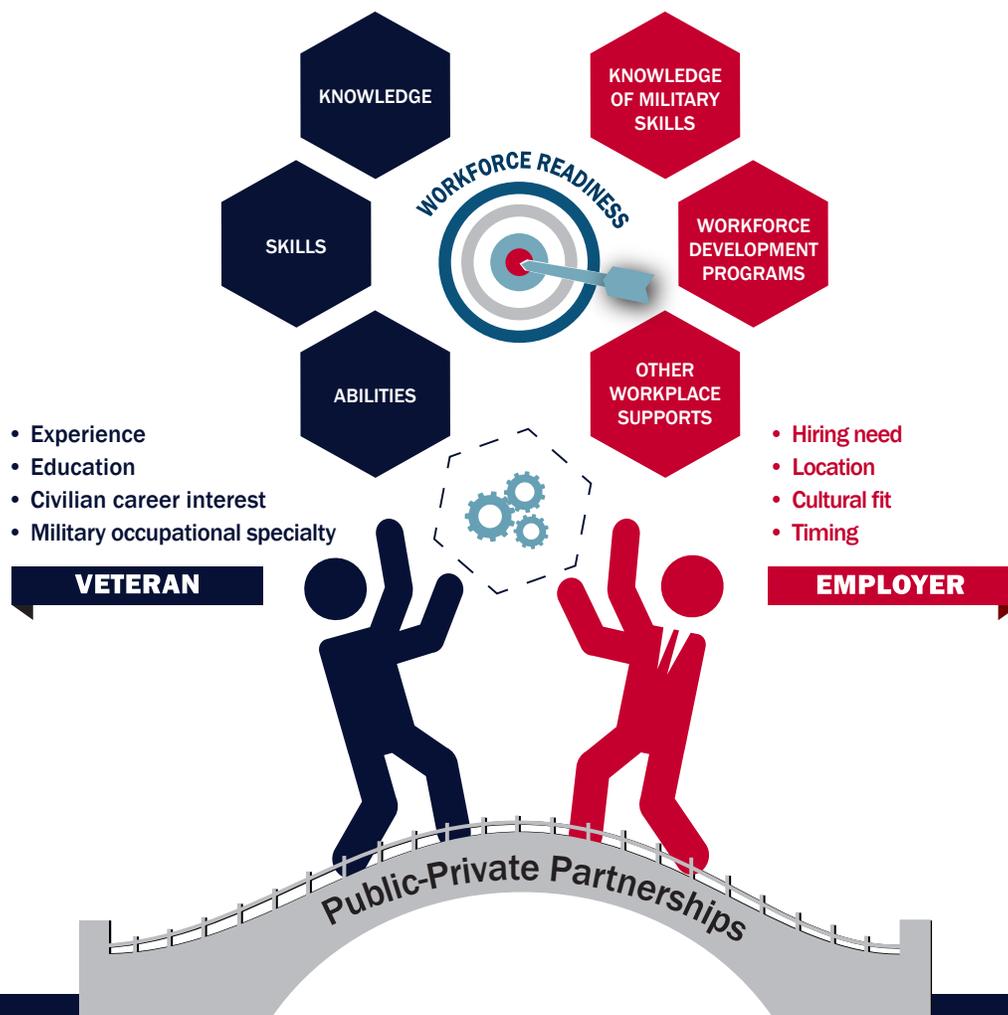
- Recognize that veterans may bring robust educational benefits that can be leveraged to fill experience or educational gaps
- Actively participate in coalitions and partnerships to build effective and sustainable veteran talent pipelines and learn about useful workplace resources and supportive practices
- Proactively train human resource professionals to understand workforce readiness issues related to veterans and transitioning service members
- Human resource professionals should strive to understand how veterans have unique circumstances that impact their workforce readiness including time and geographical constraints, cultural considerations (i.e., the work culture), and timing with their military transition

## Conclusion

Veterans bring sought after soft skills to the workplace as well as applied work experience, education, licensures and credentials. However, they also may lack industry specific experience, have trouble translating their work experience into civilian terms or have trouble determining how to apply that experience to a civilian job, especially within the time constraints associated with a military transition. Employers also may not fully understand the military, which complicates the hiring process and may at times put the veteran at a competitive disadvantage. Workforce readiness is heightened when both the veteran and employer minimize assumptions and maximize their respective assets, ensuring a positive employment outcome for the veteran and a good return on investment for the employer.

*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 first in a series of short Workforce Readiness Briefs that will cover several related topics.*

## INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE VETERAN AND EMPLOYER



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