



PennState

Onward to Opportunity and Effective Employment Components

**A COMPARISON STUDY
UTILIZING DATA FROM
THE VETERANS
METRIC INITIATIVE**

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About the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness

The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a cooperative agreement with Penn State. This work leverages funds by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Hatch Appropriations. The Clearinghouse is an interdisciplinary team of research faculty and staff, and creative services professionals committed to providing outstanding support to professionals who provide programs and services to military families. We are located within the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) at The Pennsylvania State University. For more information, visit <https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu>.

About the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families

Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) is the first national institute in higher education singularly focused on advancing the lives of the nation's military, veterans, and their families. Through its professional staff and experts, and with the support of founding partner JPMorgan Chase & Co. as well as U.S. Navy veteran, IVMF Advisory Board Co-Chair, University Life Trustee and Co-Founder & Chairman Emeritus of the Carlyle Group Daniel D'Aniello '68, H'20 and his wife, Gayle, the IVMF delivers leading national programs in career and entrepreneurship education and training, while also conducting actionable research, policy analysis, and program evaluations. The D'Aniello Institute also supports veterans and their families, once they transition back into civilian life, as they navigate the maze of social services in their communities, enhancing access to this care working side-by-side with local providers across the country. The IVMF is committed to advancing and empowering the post-service lives of those who have served in America's armed forces and their families. For more information, visit ivmf.syracuse.edu.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1. Impact Evaluation | 3 |
| 1.2. Cost-Benefit Analysis | 3 |
| 1.3. Current Report | 3 |
| 2. The Veterans Metrics Initiative | 4 |
| 2.1. TVMI Study Participants | 4 |
| 2.2. The Common Components Approach | 5 |
| 2.2.1. Types of Common Components | 5 |
| 2.2.2. Employment Common Components | 6 |
| 2.3. Effective TVMI Employment Content and Process Components | 8 |
| 3. O2O Program Components | 9 |
| 3.1. Onward to Your Career (OTYC) | 9 |
| 3.2. Certification Training | 9 |
| 3.3. Employment Services | 9 |
| 3.4. O2O Outcome Tracking | 9 |
| 4. O2O and TVMI Effective Employment Components | 11 |
| 4.1. O2O Coded Common Components | 11 |
| 4.2. Comparison of O2O to Effective Employment Components from TVMI | 12 |
| 5. Conclusion | 14 |
| Appendix A | 15 |
| Appendix B | 15 |
| References | 16 |



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Introduction

In collaboration with Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State (Clearinghouse) has been tasked with assessing the impact of the Onward to Opportunity (O2O) program. O2O is a free, career-training program that is designed to improve the vocational well-being of Service members, who are transitioning out of the military, and veterans and spouses. The goal of this project is two-fold:

- 1) evaluate O2O’s program components using a propensity-matched comparison group and
- 2) conduct a cost-benefit analysis to monetize cost savings. This second goal can be realized, if results are favorable and meet the threshold of required rigor. More information on each of these goals is included below followed by explanations on the purpose and organization of this report.

1.1. IMPACT EVALUATION

The goal of the evaluation is to assess the impact of veterans¹ participation in O2O program components on veterans' vocational well-being outcomes² (e.g., job attainment; full employment, as opposed to underemployment; promotion and salary increases; job satisfaction; job performance; and retention). This evaluation will utilize the longitudinal study participants from The Veteran Metrics Initiative (TVMI). Veterans who participated in O2O program components will be compared to veterans who have not participated in O2O components, on the above-noted employment outcomes, but who are similar on many individual-specific characteristics (e.g., gender, race, pay grade, rank, the number of deployments). Leveraging a large sample of veterans from an existing longitudinal study sample allows for capitalization of existing resources and provides evaluation rigor by using a propensity-matched comparison group.

1.2. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

In addition to the assessment of the effectiveness of O2O components, if possible, an economic assessment will be conducted that will examine the costs of carrying out the program and will compare these costs to the actual costs saved or generated by the program. O2O may have positive impacts on several targeted outcomes; however, a cost-benefit approach requires calculated program costs combined with program outcomes that are measured in dollar amounts. That is, outcomes must be monetizable. If outcome evaluation results are favorable and comprehensive enough, the Clearinghouse team can determine the monetary benefits to individuals from participating in O2O program components in comparison to non-participants in terms of individual benefits (e.g., increased income), employer benefits (e.g., reduced turnover), and societal benefits (e.g., increased taxes, lower need for public assistance). These monetary benefits are contrasted with the cost to deliver the program. If the costs saved or generated exceed the amount to deliver the program, the program provides a positive return-on-investment.

1.3. CURRENT REPORT

This report lays the groundwork for the impact evaluation and subsequent cost-benefit analysis by describing O2O program components in terms of the TVMI study. In addition, this report will examine how the O2O program components coincide with the TVMI program components that have been determined to have a positive impact on employment-related outcomes.

To accomplish this task, Clearinghouse evaluators worked with IVMF researchers and O2O program staff to gain a better understanding of the program and its components. The Clearinghouse team attended a virtual Onward to Your Career (OTYC) training for a Fort Bragg cohort who participated in the O2O program beginning in April 2021. In addition, a data-use agreement has been established between the Clearinghouse and IVMF to gain access to programmatic and outcome data on O2O participants. Further, IVMF provided a data dictionary to accompany the variables in the dataset. Researchers from both organizations are in the process of developing protocols related to creating the matched sample. The Clearinghouse and IVMF data teams are currently meeting weekly to ensure that the best comparison group will be created from TVMI data.

Before examining program components that are specific to O2O, more information will be provided regarding TVMI, the study participants, and the approach to identifying and examining the effectiveness of common components. Then, an overview will be provided that defines the types of common components that exist in veterans' programs and services across a variety of domains (i.e., employment, education, health, legal/financial/housing, social) with an explicit focus on the employment domain. Results gleaned from this overview will be discussed with regard to an analysis of employment-program components, identified from TVMI, and their effectiveness on employment-related outcomes. Next, the Clearinghouse will discuss the O2O program and its program components using TVMI's framework. The alignment between employment program components found to be effective in TVMI and O2O's program component offerings will, then, be examined. Finally, some brief conclusions and the next steps for the O2O evaluation project will be presented.

1. While O2O serves Service members, veterans, and spouses, this sample evaluation only includes veterans as only veterans are included in The Veterans Metrics Initiative (TVMI) study sample.

2. Outcomes assessed may vary because utilization of a propensity-matched sample requires outcomes to be measured by both O2O and TVMI. Thus, examining comparisons between components and specific vocational well-being outcomes may not be possible.

2. The Veterans Metrics Initiative

This project utilizes data from TVMI, which is a longitudinal survey of well-being and program use by U.S. military veterans who are transitioning from the military. TVMI is unique because it is the first study to examine the transition experiences of post-9/11 veterans immediately following separation from the military. Within TVMI, veterans' well-being is examined from a holistic perspective rather than focusing on one aspect of transition (e.g., health). The TVMI study team included the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, Inc., (HJF) and a multidisciplinary team from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Clearinghouse, the Department of Defense (DoD), and ICF International (Vogt et al., 2018).

The goal of the TVMI study is to document veteran well-being in four key domains (i.e., vocation; financial, legal, and housing; mental and physical health; and social relationships) over the first 3 years of veterans' transitions from military service to civilian life. The TVMI study has three aims: (1) examine veteran well-being across the four domains, (2) describe the programs that are being used by transitioning veterans by distilling them into their components and examining common components across programs, and (3) assess linkages between program common components and veteran well-being (Morgan et al., 2018; Vogt et al., 2018).

2.1. TVMI STUDY PARTICIPANTS

In September 2016, 48,956 veterans, who had separated in the prior 3 months from active duty or activated status, were mailed an invitation to participate in the TVMI web-based survey. Invitations were mailed to veterans using information gathered from the VA/DoD Identity Repository database housed within the Defense Manpower Data Center, which maintains military service data, including contact information. To be eligible to participate, veterans had to have served more than 180 days and had to have separated from one of the four active components (i.e., Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps) or reserve components (i.e., Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Navy Reserve, or Marine Corps Reserve) within the past 90 days. Effort was

taken to ensure that the sample was representative of the veteran population and that enough members were recruited from various groups (e.g., men/women, officer/enlisted, branches) to examine differences and account for attrition through the course of the study. Of the 48,956 invited to participate, 9,566 veterans completed the first survey in November 2016. This resulted in a response rate of 23% for Wave 1 (Vogt et al., 2018). Participants were surveyed at five additional time points (i.e., waves) across the first 3 years post-separation from the military. Surveys were administered in approximately 6-month intervals between November 2016 and May 2019. Figure 1 provides additional information pertaining to each wave.

FIGURE 1. TVMI SURVEY ADMINISTRATION WAVES 1-6

| WAVE 1 | WAVE 2 | WAVE 3 | WAVE 4 | WAVE 5 | WAVE 6 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| November 2016 | May 2017 | November 2017 | May 2018 | November 2018 | May 2019 |
| 3 months post-separation n=9,566 | 9 months post-separation n=7,200 | 15 months post-separation n=7,201 | 21 months post-separation n=6,480 | 27 months post-separation n=5,844 | 33 months post-separation n=5,258 |

2.2. THE COMMON COMPONENTS APPROACH

As previously mentioned, two of the goals of the TVMI study were to describe the programs being used by transitioning veterans by distilling these programs into their components, examining common components across the programs, and assessing the linkages between the program common components and veteran well-being (Morgan et al., 2018; Vogt et al., 2018). Identifying common components came from the notion that there is an abundance of resources available to veterans; however, very little research has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and services. In addition, evaluations can be time consuming and cost-prohibitive for many service organizations. Therefore, while the traditional common components approach relies on identifying the components supported from experimental evaluations, this adapted approach summarizes program components and examines the effectiveness of components where evaluation does not exist. This approach is built upon the distillation and matching model (Chorpita et al., 2007), a meta-analysis of common components of parenting programs (Kaminski et al., 2008), and the theoretical framework of common factors in HIV prevention (Rotheram-Borus et al., 2009). Thus, this modified approach builds upon these works and seeks to capture a wide range of components across a variety of different domains (e.g., employment, financial). More information about this approach as it relates to the TVMI study is described in Morgan et al (2018).

Related to the current study, TVMI study participants were asked to indicate the specific employment programs they used during transition. A program in the study was defined as “any activity designed to meet your specific needs.” The nominated program could have taken many forms. For example, the program could have been information the veteran had gathered on a website, a service the veteran had used, an online instruction the veteran had used, or a class that had been delivered in an in-person setting by a facilitator or counselor. Veterans were asked 37 questions about programs used since discharge from the military in each of the four domains: vocation, financial/legal/housing, health, and social. These questions were adapted from The Philanthropy Roundtable (Meyer, 2013). Twelve items were asked in the vocation domain, and seven of them focused on employment. The remaining vocational items focused on education. Veterans were asked about employment programs they had used over the last 3 months in several employment areas. They were asked to nominate their use of specific types of programs (e.g., online job databases, career fairs, resume writing, job placement, career counseling, job training) and provide the program name. Veterans could nominate two programs per question and could list the same program for more than one question; therefore, the veteran could nominate up to 14 employment programs. Veterans also had the option to select “I did not participate in these types of programs” for each of the seven employment program questions. Appendix A includes the employment program questions from TVMI.

Veteran-utilized employment programs were then distilled into their components (i.e., content, process, barrier reduction, and sustainability). This method provides a robust evaluation approach from which to compare participants who used O2O components with non-participants. In collaboration with IVMF, a comparable group of participants will be identified. Propensity matching will then be employed to create comparable groups of participants by selecting participants who have used O2O components and pairing this group with participants who have not used O2O components. These techniques adjust for confounding variables that are potentially predictive of selection into treatment or control groups (Braitman & Rosenbaum, 2002).

2.2.1. TYPES OF COMMON COMPONENTS

Components refer to the essential functions or principles and associated elements and intervention activities (e.g., active ingredients, behavioral kernels; Embry, 2004) that are judged necessary to produce desired outcomes. The Clearinghouse used a modified Common Components Analysis (CCA) approach to identify and examine the elements, or the active ingredients, of veterans’ programs and services. In doing so, the Clearinghouse categorized program components as falling within one of the following four types:³

1. **Content:** refers to programmatic components that are included for educational purposes (i.e., components that teach or provide information). For example, information on how to write a resume, how to search for available jobs, or what to wear to an interview.
2. **Process:** refers to how the program conveys information and teaches skills. Mode of delivery (e.g., in-person, online, phone) and method of delivery (e.g., direct instruction, mentoring/coaching, peer-to-peer interaction) fall within this component category. While process components can be examined separately, the examination of process components is typically embedded within the content components.
3. **Barrier Reduction:** refers to programmatic aspects that foster recipient accessibility to, and engagement in, the program. This can be by providing tangible support (e.g., transportation to the program) and by providing components that support access to the program (e.g., reducing the stigma of participation).
4. **Sustainability:** refers to aspects of the program that relate to participant engagement after the program has ended (e.g., how does the program keep participants engaged once formal programming has ended?). Sustainable program components may include the provision of community referrals, the establishment of alumni groups, or other ongoing social support groups.

3. While the above represents the key component areas from TVMI, note that the coding scheme for distilling components was extensive; thus, the details included in this report are not exhaustive. Program characteristics were also captured (e.g., target audience, location, previous evaluation, data-collection types, and implementation requirements).

2.2.2. EMPLOYMENT COMMON COMPONENTS

Each of the program component categories and their subsequent subcomponents can be examined to understand effectiveness. For example, the information learned from what is known from TVMI effective components in each of these categories within the employment domain can be used to understand effectiveness in relation to the components O2O provides its program participants. However, before discussing which components are most effective, an overview of the components identified within each of the four

overarching component types will be provided. Table 1 defines employment components that fall within the broader content component category. Table 2 defines components that fall within the process category. Table 3 defines components that fall within the barrier reduction category. Table 4 defines components that fall within the sustainability category. For detail evidence of the effectiveness of these employment components see citation-Perkins, D. F. et al., 2022 in the International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance.

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT CONTENT COMPONENTS OVERVIEW

| Content Components | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Component | Definition |
| Interviewing | Interview preparation and tools. |
| Resume writing | Resume writing including templates. |
| Translating military to civilian work | Helping the veteran understand the similarities between his or her military job and possible civilian jobs. |
| Job board, search engine | Pertains to only the tool that helps connect veterans to jobs. |
| Networking conference strangers | Infrequent meetings (annual, bi-annual) to share ideas with a large group of relative who are connected by common interest. |
| Career planning, exploration | Matching a veteran’s interests to available jobs; devising a plan for attaining long-term career goal; industry overview; and salary-negotiation information. |
| Entrepreneurship | Starting and running one’s own business. |
| Job accommodations | For veterans who have a disability or condition that prevents standard employment. |
| Job training and certification | Programs that provide training in a specific field with a pathway to employment, such as fellowships, job placements, information technology training, project management certification, or teacher training. |

TABLE 2. PROCESS COMPONENTS OVERVIEW

| Process Components | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Component | Definition |
| Self-paced | Handouts, online text (no interaction). |
| Direct instruction | Curriculum or manual or video from an instructor using a lecture, manual, or video. |
| Rehearsal, role-playing, practice | Practicing/rehearsing skills in vivo or reenacting a hypothetical situation in session with feedback (Garland et al., 2008 – e.g., mock interview). |
| Interactive (non-person) | Web-based tools that include some interaction with the participant including specific information (e.g., financial calculator). |
| Mentoring/coaching/therapists | One-on-one program delivery. |
| Networking group (professional) | Formal sharing of professional information. |

Note. The list of process components is not comprehensive. Rather, the components provided represent the most common process components in the employment domain.

TABLE 3. BARRIER REDUCTION COMPONENTS OVERVIEW

| Barrier Components | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Component | Definition |
| Fees | Registration waivers, scaled support. |
| Lack of transportation to the program | Helping the veteran get to the program or the program coming to the individual. |
| Scholarship for education | Include free or reduced-cost classes or education. |
| Licensing assistance | Obtaining licenses reduces employment barriers for veterans. This is considered a tangible support because it increases access to professional licensing for employment and can include certificates that are needed to do a specific job (e.g., electrician certificate). |
| Job placement | Providing a job directly through the benefit (e.g., temporary agency provides a job to the person or a program that provides a job after the training is complete). |
| Employment preference | Explicit description of points given for veterans to obtain a job. |
| Advantage in scored tests | Adding points to tests for employment. |

Note. The list of barrier-reduction components is not comprehensive. Rather, the components provided represent the most common barrier-reduction components related to access and tangible supports in the employment domain.

TABLE 4. SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENTS OVERVIEW

| Sustainability Components | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Component | Definition |
| Booster session | Additional, planned sessions once the original program is complete. |
| Helpline | A person receives a phone call for support, a direct line for services (content) over the phone. |
| Referrals | Program re-direct to other programs to help fill the gap of services. |
| Alumni organization | Network of alums established and emphasized as important ongoing feature. |
| Ongoing peer support | Social connections to the group (not professional). |
| Ongoing coaching | After the program is complete, there is a coach/mentor/therapist (counseling) available for additional support. |

Note. The list of barrier-reduction components is not comprehensive. Rather, the components provided represent the most common barrier-reduction components related to access and tangible supports in the employment domain.

In the section below, TVMI components will be discussed with regard to the specific components that are associated with positive job-related outcomes. Then, this report will describe background information on the O2O program and its components, which have been gathered from the Fort Bragg event observation and the various programmatic materials provided by the O2O team (e.g., O2O outcomes tracking presentation). This report will conclude with a comparison of the O2O and TVMI program components and a discussion on the degree to which the O2O program components align with the effective TVMI program components.

2.3. EFFECTIVE TVMI EMPLOYMENT CONTENT AND PROCESS COMPONENTS

To distill and identify common components across the programs that are most frequently used by veterans, two sources were used:

- (1) veterans' self-report of employment program utilization and
- (2) website coding of programs that received three or more nominations from veterans.

Effective program components, associated with changes in veterans' well-being outcomes following separation from military service, were assessed using propensity-matching techniques and other statistical analyses (e.g., logistic regression, growth modeling) to examine well-being related outcomes among veterans who reported engaging in a program that included some or all the identified common components in its design. For the employment domain, specifically, this allowed researchers to assess whether the common components were critical in the success of the program and determine which components led to positive employment outcomes (e.g., job attainment). Based on the TVMI data, the top 10 employment components that are most likely to lead to getting a job or leaving a job for a better opportunity are included in Table 5.

TABLE 5. TOP 10 EMPLOYMENT COMPONENTS

| Component | Likelihood of positive employment outcome | Outcome |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. Networking conference | 3 times | Getting a job |
| 2. Interviewing, mentor/coach | 2.8 times | Getting a job |
| 3. Entrepreneurship, direct instruction | 2.6 times | Better job opportunity |
| 4. Resume-writing, mentor/coach | 2.3 times | Getting a job |
| 5. Translating military to civilian work, mentor | 2.2 times | Getting a job |
| 6. Career planning or exploration, interactive online | 2.0 times | Getting a job |
| 7. Webinars/virtual seminars | 2.0 times | Getting a job |
| 8. Job training and certification, direct instruction | 98% | Getting a job |
| 9. Resume-writing, direct instruction | 96% | Better job opportunity |
| 10. Resume-writing, interactive online | 87% | Better job opportunity |

3. O2O Program Components

O2O is a career-training program that provides professional certification and employee support services to transitioning Service members, veterans, and military spouses. The O2O program consists of three main parts: (1) a career orientation called Onward to Your Career (OTYC), (2) certification training, and (3) employment services that are provided by Hire Heroes USA (HHUSA).

O2O is offered nationwide at military installations across all Service branches. There is also an online-only O2O option for military-affiliated individuals who are unable to attend an in-person program (e.g., participants who do not live on or near a military base and do not have access to installation services). The duration of the program is typically 6 months; however, participants have access to O2O's content for up to 1 year.

The goal of O2O participation extends beyond just employment. Goals vary at the individual level and may include completing training, continuing with higher education, or upskilling to increase an individual's level of employability.

3.1. ONWARD TO YOUR CAREER (OTYC)

The O2O program differs slightly among the installation, online, and the community-based implementations. These differences mainly exist in the OTYC portion of the program. OTYC includes modules, an employer panel, and resources provided by veteran service organizations. On installations, OTYC typically lasts 3 days; however, some community-based cohorts (such as Pittsburgh's O2O program) use an adapted 1-day version, and the online O2O program does not include an OTYC component. The modules can vary by installation. According to IVMF's User Experience Manager, common variations across cohorts include (1) the employer's partners and local organizations that are invited to present on their specific organization's culture and employment opportunities, (2) the length of time dedicated to each OTYC module, (3) the order in which the OTYC modules are presented, (4) the "extra-curricular" offerings during OTYC (e.g., networking happy hours, resume workshops, one-on-one mock interview practice), and (5) the pre-work activities that are assigned ahead of time or during OTYC implementation. As an example, during the observation of the cohort Fort Bragg, the following content was provided to the cohort over 3 days:

- **Day 1:** Present the USO Pathfinder, the personality assessment provided by the Travis Manion Foundation; how to develop a growth mindset; and learn how to work with a recruiter presented by Brooksource.
- **Day 2:** Present HHUSA, American Corporate Partners, LinkedIn/Digital Networking/Personal Branding; offer information regarding the IVMF Core and the learning management platform (Percipio); and provide tips for studying for certification exams.
- **Day 3:** Spotlight employers such as Amazon, Travelers Insurance, Spectrum, CACI, HilBrom and offer breakout courses for specific pathways: Human Resources, Project Management Professional, and Information Technology foundation courses.

3.2. CERTIFICATION TRAINING

O2O has several learning pathways that are designed to tailor the participants' employment-related training based on their desired career track. Examples of career tracks include information technology, business or project management, and the customer service industry. Often, these learning pathways offer coursework that fulfills the educational requirements for certain industry certifications.

Certifications offered to participants are based on the most requested industry certifications. Participants are expected to finish coursework in 90 days and complete a series of practice exams. For example, the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification requires 35 hours of coursework and is the most difficult certification to pass that O2O offers. The PMP exam takes approximately 4 hours to complete. Participants need a score of 80% or higher on the practice exam to gain access to the second and third practice exams. Participants must complete and pass three practice exams to receive a voucher for the certification test. Once participants complete their certification program, they are directed to HHUSA for employment services.

3.3. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

HHUSA offers employment services to O2O program graduates (e.g., job searching, resume writing). Concurrently, O2O works with employers to ensure that their curriculum meets the current needs of the industry. Employers have the opportunity to review the training curriculum to ensure it aligns with their hiring needs. In addition, they are provided access to the pool of O2O participants and, due to this, are likely able to develop a deep understanding and appreciation for the skills, capabilities, and values that this military-connected population can lend to their organizations and the labor market.



3.4. O2O OUTCOME TRACKING

O2O collects information about demographics including specific aspects of military service, program status, education cohort, and location. In addition, O2O collects outcome data related to individuals' goals. For example, these data may examine whether people are employed or promoted or choose to further their education.

The endpoint for tracking cohort-level outcomes is at the 6-month mark. However, due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, IVMF cannot ask participants whether they completed the certification after the training. However, HHUSA collects employer data on an installation, follows up with each cohort, and shares the data they collect on job-related outcomes with IVMF. Self-reported follow-up also occurs with the advisor, but this follow-up process is generally informal. IVMF is currently exploring strategies to improve data collection with HHUSA. Appendix B includes a list of O2O data categories.

4. O2O and TVMI Effective Employment Components

This section summarizes the O2O components identified relative to TVMI components. These components were coded as the program existed during the TVMI study time frame (2016, 2018). The components were confirmed through conversations with IVMF and O2O program staff to ensure they were adequately captured. After a discussion of the components identified for O2O, an examination of the effectiveness of employment components on specific employment outcomes is provided relative to what O2O offers.

4.1. O2O CODED COMMON COMPONENTS

The main content components coded for O2O include interviewing, resume writing, career planning and exploration, and job training. The main process components include direct instruction; rehearsal, role-playing, and practice; mentoring and coaching; and professional networking groups. O2O’s primary barrier-reduction components include no transportation needs, licensing assistance

and scholarships, and job placement. The components related to sustainability include referrals and access to alumni organizations.

Table 6 lists the O2O components and operational definitions and/or examples of each component type.

TABLE 6. O2O COMMON COMPONENTS

| Component | O2O Application |
|---|---|
| Content and Process Component | |
| Interviewing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsal/Role-Play/Practice • Mentor/Coach | Installation teams and IVMF advisors execute individual learning plans and, with HHUSA, provide interview assistance or interview matching when individuals are ready. |
| Resume writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor/Coach | Individual learning plans include personalized one-on-one resume writing assistance with a coach or mentor. O2O/HHUSA may also provide resume templates. |
| Career planning, exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor/Coach • Networking Group | This is done via mentors/coaches and networking groups and includes access to career coaching services, networking events, and workshops. The goal is for participants to learn personal marketing techniques and skills. |
| Job training and certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Instruction | This includes access to training and professional certifications and incorporates three learning pathways to further tailor training to participants’ industry of choice. |
| Barrier Reduction Components | |
| No transportation needed | Programs are offered on installations, which reduces the need for transportation. There is also a distance-learning online option. |
| Educational scholarships | The coursework is free and accessible for up to 6 months after participants’ completion of O2O. |
| Licensing assistance | One industry certification per person is funded after coursework and practice exams are completed. |
| Job placement | Individualized career services are provided via program partners – HHUSA. |
| Sustainability Components | |
| Referrals | Referrals to relevant resources are provided, and warm handoffs occur between O2O and HHUSA. |
| Alumni organization | After completion of program requirements, recipients are granted access to a nation-wide network of O2O alumni. |

4.2. COMPARISON OF O2O TO EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT COMPONENTS FROM TVMI

Apart from the process component, rehearsal/role-play/practice, O2O’s content and process components are significant predictors of job outcomes including full-time job attainment, salary increase, job promotion, and leaving a job for a better opportunity. Of note, component use and these associated outcomes were more effective at certain waves of the TVMI study or at different points since the transition. This is understandable given the somewhat

linear trajectory of certain outcomes or the preconditions that exist for movement in outcomes. For example, one would expect an individual to have a job before they obtained a promotion. Further, an individual must have a job before he or she can leave a job for a better opportunity. Table 7 shows O2O’s identified program components and their related job outcomes across the six waves or, approximately, the first 3 years of transition.

TABLE 7. O2O PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND TVMI EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

| O2O Coded Components | Outcome: Full-Time Job Attainment | Outcome: Salary | Outcome: Job Promotion | Outcome: Better Opportunity |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Employment | | | | |
| Interviewing • Rehearsal/Role-Play/Practice • Mentor/Coach | Mentor/Coach ① → ③ 2.5x | | | Mentor/Coach ① → ③ 38% ② → ③ 51% |
| Resume Writing • Mentor/Coach | Mentor/Coach ① → ③ 2.3x | Mentor/Coach ① → ② ③ | | Mentor/Coach ① → ③ 30% ② → ③ 39% |
| Career Planning and Exploration • Mentor/Coach • Networking Group | Mentor/Coach ② → ③ 69% | Mentor/Coach ① → ③ ② → ③ | Mentor/Coach ① → ③ 27% ② → ③ 20% Networking Group ① → ③ 23% ① ② → ③ 30% ③ → ④ 30% | Mentor/Coach ③ → ④ 24% ④ → ⑥ 28% Networking Group ③ → ④ 25% ④ → ⑥ 25% ⑥ 42% |
| Job Training and Certification • Direct Instruction | Direct Instruction ② → ④ 98% | | Direct Instruction ① → ③ 24% ② → ③ 21% ④ 24% ③ → ④ 32% | |
| Social* | | | | |
| Leadership/Communication | | | | |

Note. The numbers in the circles in the table above correspond to the initial wave and the outcome followed by the likelihood of achieving outcomes. *Programs often provide content than spans more than one domain. Although this report focuses on employment components and employment outcomes, O2O does provide leadership and communication skills; however, outcomes have not yet been assessed for these components in this domain.

To summarize the table, veterans who used a program that offered interviewing content with a mentor/coach at Wave 1 were 2.5 times likely to obtain a job by Wave 3. Similarly, veterans who used a program that offered interviewing content with a mentor/coach at Wave 2 were 51% more likely to obtain a job and were 38% more likely to leave a job for a better opportunity by Wave 3. The rehearsal, role-play, and practice⁴ component was not a significant process component for interviewing.

Veterans who used a program that offered resume-writing content with a mentor/coach at Wave 1 were 2.3 times more likely to get a job by Wave 3. Resume writing with a mentor/coach was also significant for salary and leaving a job for a better opportunity. Veterans who used a program that offered resume writing with a mentor/coach at Wave 1 were 30% more likely to leave their job for a better opportunity by Wave 3. Veterans who used a program that offered this component at Wave 2 were 39% more likely to leave their job for a better opportunity by Wave 3.

Career planning with a mentor/coach was significant across all job outcomes: job attainment, salary, promotion, and leaving a job for a better opportunity. Veterans who used a program that offered career planning with a mentor/coach at Wave 2 were 69% more likely to get a job by Wave 3. Veterans who used this component and process at Wave 1 were more likely to have an increase in salary and were 27% more likely to receive a job promotion by Wave 3. Furthermore, regarding the outcome better opportunity, veterans who used a program that offered career planning with a mentor/coach at Wave 3 were 24% more likely to receive a better opportunity at Wave 4. Veterans who used this offering at Wave 4 were 28% more likely to receive a better opportunity by Wave 6. Career planning with a networking group was also significant for job promotion and leaving a job for a better opportunity with offerings at Waves 1, 2, 3, and 4, and outcomes were significant at Waves 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Finally, job training, O2O's key content component, was significant when provided by direct instruction. Veterans who used a program that offered job training at Wave 2 were 98% more likely to obtain a job by Wave 4. Veterans who used a program that offered job training at Wave 1 were 24% more likely to receive a job promotion by Wave 3. At Waves 3 and 4, veterans who used this component were 21% and 24%, respectively, more likely to receive a promotion if they used a program that offered job training provided through direct instruction at Wave 2. Further, veterans who used a program that offered this component at Wave 3 were 32% more likely to receive a job promotion by Wave 4.

O2O collects outcome data relative to individuals' goals. An example could be whether people are employed or promoted or choose to further their education. Examining individual goals is important because many individuals who use job-training and upskilling programs may already have jobs. For these individuals, job attainment is not a relevant outcome to measure. Instead, job promotion and leaving a job for a better opportunity may be more relevant indicators of program success. Therefore, researchers examined O2O program components and considered a wide spectrum of possible employment-related outcomes.

The aforementioned components have significant effects, but additive effects have not been examined yet. For example, many programs span across different domains, and O2O is no exception. O2O offers leadership and communication-skills training that is incorporated into TVMI's social domain. However, how social component offerings play into employment outcomes for O2O has not yet been examined. Further, it may take longer than the TVMI study time frame (i.e., 3 years) to see meaningful change in certain outcomes, and some outcomes, which are thought to be important immediately after transition, may show up later. Thus, continually offering programs that are helpful beyond the immediate transition period and are helpful for more than job attainment is valuable.

4. The lack of significance related to this process component may reflect TVMI coding. This process was not often offered and was typically coded in tandem with mentor/coach.

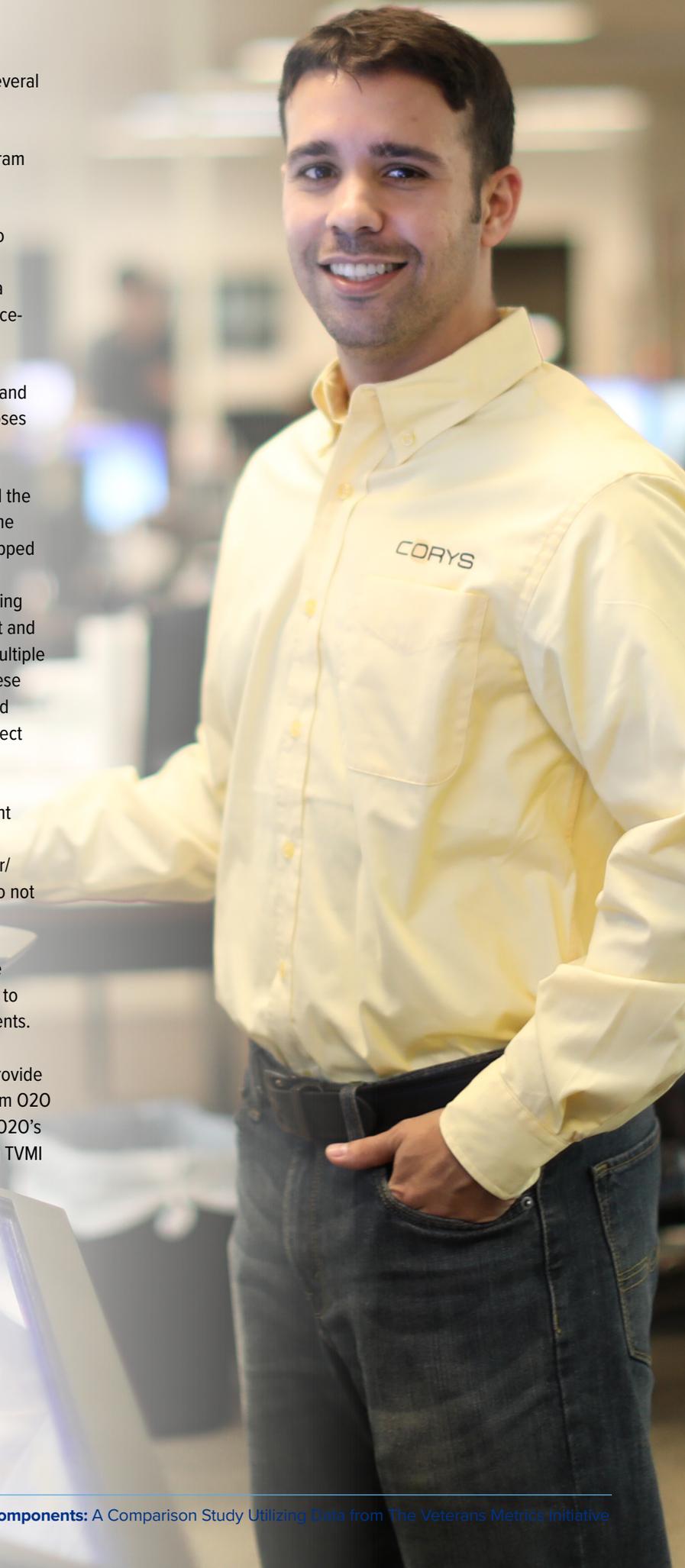
5. Conclusion

Identifying evidence-informed components is important for several reasons:

- Allows for the identification, study, and evaluation of program components;
- Identifies components that can spur innovation and lead to optimization or re-design of a program to utilize evidence-informed components or can prompt the development of a new program or implementation strategy that uses evidence-informed components; and
- Determines components that are useful for dissemination and implementation of evidence-informed programming purposes and can inform policy, education, and practice.

With the above in mind, this report identified and summarized the common effective components found in the TVMI study and the components of O2O. Then both sets of components were mapped to assess the alignment between O2O's components and the TVMI effective employment components. Except for interviewing through rehearsal/role-play practice, all of O2O's employment and processes components were found to be significant across multiple waves and across several employment-related outcomes. These components include job attainment, job promotion, salary, and leaving a job for a better opportunity. Job training through direct instruction, O2O's main content component, was a significant predictor of job attainment and promotion. Furthermore, the mentor/coach process component continues to be a significant component. The O2O program may be able to significantly strengthen their offerings by integrating the use of the mentor/coach process into their content components that currently do not include this process.

This report served to present the groundwork and discuss the process for creating a matched-propensity comparison group to further examine the effectiveness of O2O's program components. The next report will outline the methodology of the matching techniques, describe the characteristics of the sample, and provide findings from the matched propensity analyses using data from O2O and TVMI. This design will allow for more depth as it will use O2O's program data and will increase evaluation rigor by leveraging TVMI as a comparison group.



Appendix A

Employment Questions Prompting Program Nominations

- What program(s) have you used that offered an online job database, such as USAJobs, TA Online, or Indeed?
- What program(s) have you used that offered a career fair, such as Veteran Recruiting Services or NCOA Career Expo?
- What program(s) have you used that assisted you with writing a resume or provided a military skills translator, such as Resume Engine or My Next Move for Veterans?
- What program(s) have you used that offered a job placement component, such as Hiring Our Heroes, VetJobs.com, or Hire Heroes USA?
- What program(s) have you used that offered a career counseling or mentoring component such as American Corporate Partners, Veteran Gold Card, or Veterans Business Outreach Program?
- What program(s) have you used that offered a training or certification component, such as Vet Success, FastTrac for Veteran Entrepreneurs, or ProjectReturn2Work?
- What other employment-related program(s) have you used that you have not mentioned previously?

Appendix B

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age at time of enrollment
- Gender
- Race
- Pre-program employment status
- Highest level of education

MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS

- Military connection
- Branch of service
- Pay grade
- Date of separation
- Total years of service

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION CHARACTERISTICS

- Online vs. Installation model
- Location of participation (State)
- Cohort start date
- Course name
- Course track (high-level grouping of courses – Project Management, IT, etc.)
- Learning Management System (i.e. the platform through which they accessed the content)
- Cohort status (closed / in-progress)
- Referred for employment services with HHUSA (y/n)

OUTPUT / OUTCOME INFORMATION

- OTYC complete (y/n)
- Course complete (y/n)
- IVMF paid for their cert exam (y/n)
- Entered higher ed post-program (y/n)
- Hire (y/n)
- Date of hire
- UPO (y/n) – full definition to be provided, this is our more global positive outcome marker
- Salary

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