

Cross-Agency Priority Goal: Veteran Career Readiness

FY2013 Q1 Status Update

Cross-Agency Priority Goal Statement

Improve career readiness of veterans. By September 30, 2013, increase the percent of eligible service members who will be served by career readiness and preparedness programs from 50 percent to 90 percent in order to improve their competitiveness in the job market.

Goal Leader

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About this document

The Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals were a key innovation introduced in the FY2013 Federal Budget. These goals focus on 14 major issues that run across several Federal agencies. Each of these historic goals has a Goal Leader who is a senior level White House official and is fully accountable for the success and outcomes of the goal.

Historically, areas of shared responsibility for multiple government agencies have been resistant to real progress. Success in these areas requires a new kind of management approach – one that brings people together from across and outside the Federal Government to coordinate their work and combine their skills, insights, and resources. The CAP Goals represent the subset of the President's priorities for which this approach is likeliest to bear fruit.

This report discusses one of these CAP Goals, the Veteran Career Readiness Goal, in detail, describing the plan for achieving the goal and the current status of progress. To see the full list of CAP Goals and to find out more about them, we encourage you to visit performance.gov.

Contents

Overview	1
Strategies	2
Next Steps	10
Future Actions	10
Contributing Programs and Other Factors.....	10
Additional References.....	10

Overview

Having successfully served and defended our nation, our veterans are well-trained, highly skilled, and ready apply their experiences to bolster the Nation’s workforce. The education and training gained in the service, make them a tremendous source of value to any workplace, school, or community they choose to join.

This goal focuses on implementing the President’s commitment to improve career readiness, reduce veteran unemployment, and put veterans to work. To create conditions for success, the White House economic and domestic policy teams have partnered with the Departments of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Labor to form a task force to design and implement strategies to increase the career readiness of all service members.

Data on separating service members shows that less than 50 percent participate in transition programs geared toward preparing them for civilian careers.¹ The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act of 2011 requires that 100 percent of eligible separating service members receive transition assistance. The updated job-seeking tools, assist separating service members in translating their military specialties into comparable private sector parlance. The program also helps veterans capitalize on educational opportunities provided by the GI Bill to build or enter careers of their choosing. Measuring progress is a challenge as there is no standardized system to track separating veterans that would allow a deeper understanding of the problems they might face in the labor market.

The Veterans Career Readiness Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goal seeks to improve the career readiness of veterans through the following four key strategies:

1. **Ensuring service members are prepared for separation.** Ensuring service members are fully prepared for separation requires a dual approach. First, apply a dedicated focus on the individual service member by bolstering and standardizing the career counseling services received prior to, during, and post separation. Attention on key issues such as financial counseling, personal goal setting, and strong information sharing and referral will improve the transition for the service members. Additionally,

¹ Comparison of yearly DOL Transition Assistance Program Participants with DOD Separators Throughput.

before final departure from the military each service member will participate in a standalone CAPSTONE event. This end-of-service event will validate and verify standard transition objectives have been met and execute a warm-handover to federal and local services that can continue to assist the individual or their family pre and post transition.

2. **Maximizing Veterans' career development potential.** To ensure that veterans and their families have the high quality resources necessary to maximize their career potential, we will transform the approach to education, licensing and credentialing opportunities.
3. **Partnering with public/private industry to employ the unique skills of veterans.** Veterans have received the best military training in the world. Through partnerships we are promoting the hiring of veterans by working to translate their skills and experiences into marketable resources for public and private sectors.
4. **Fostering Veteran entrepreneurship.** By working closely with the Small business Administration (SBA) and its resource partners, we can equip service members with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to leverage opportunities and become successful entrepreneurs.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Ensuring service members are prepared for separation. Ensuring service members are prepared for service separation and reentry into civilian life through the following sub-strategies:

- **Developing a revised Transition Assistance Program (TAP) curriculum:** Following the intent set forth in the VOW ACT, the Department of Defense, in partnership with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, and Education are providing enhanced services for our service members as they transition from active duty to civilian life. Previously, transition preparation for the service member entering the civilian workforce occurred late in a service member's military career lifecycle – near the point of separation. Now, these concepts will be incorporated earlier in a service member's career to ensure that the counseling, assessment, and access to resources to build skills or credentials, occurs at earlier stages of the military career. Additionally, as part of the Administration's newly re-designed military transition program, the Small Business Administration has developed and is piloting a veterans entrepreneurship training program entitled, "Operation Boots to Business: from Service to Startup." The President's Budget provides \$7 million to expand this program in 2013, providing exposure to entrepreneurship training to all 250,000 service members who transition from active duty to civilian life each year.

Key Measure 1: Increase separating veterans' access to transition services to 90 percent.

- There were 144,242 participants in the DOL VETS TAP program in FY11, and 160,182 participants in FY12. There have been 38,724 participants in FY13 through Q1.
- Approximately 262,889 post-9/11 era veterans were enrolled from November 11, 2011 through December 31, 2012. Of those new enrollments 135,407 were offered and accepted

a staff assisted or intensive service within the month of enrollment. This is a 51.51 percent rate of service receipt within the month of enrollment. (Note: Includes self-service and/or virtual enrollments within the overall counts of veterans enrolled.)

Strategy 2: Maximizing Veterans' career development potential. Ensuring that veterans have the tools and support to maximize their career development potential through the following sub-strategies:

- **Ensuring standards of excellence in GI Bill education:** To ensure our service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members have the information they need to make informed decisions concerning their educational benefits, the President directed his Administration to develop principles of excellence to strengthen oversight, enforcement, and accountability within these benefits programs. These principles were codified in an [Executive Order signed in April 2012](#).
 - **Progress update.** Over \$26 billion has been paid to over 928,000 beneficiaries under the Post-9/11 GI Bill since program inception. Educational benefits worth over \$10 billion annually are being paid to nearly one million beneficiaries in VA's education programs.
- **Streamlining civilian credentialing for service members and Veterans:** In May 2012, the Department of Defense established a Military Credentialing and Licensing Task Force, whose goal is to identify opportunities where service members can earn civilian occupational credentials and licenses without the need for additional training.
 - **Progress update.** With the help of the Task Force's efforts, hundreds of service members have earned or are in the process of earning machinist, logistics, welding, and engineering certifications for high-demand manufacturing jobs, and efforts are underway to develop similar pathways for the attainment of information technology certifications. First lady challenged all 50 governors to take action to have legislation for credentialing and licensing for veterans by 2015.
- **Preparing military spouses for the workforce:** DOD delivers a comprehensive education and career solution for military spouses pursuing training, jobs, and sustainable careers by providing career services and connecting them to employers seeking military spouse employees with 21st-century workforce skill sets. DOD's Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) currently has over 160 employer partners across numerous sectors: corporate, government, non-profit, healthcare, academia, and small business, many of whom offer transferrable, portable career opportunities to relocating military spouse employees. The Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) program is focused on four areas: My Career Exploration (career assessment, interest/skill inventories); My Education and Training (financial aid, licensing/credentialing, Post 9/11 GI Bill, Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) Scholarship); My Career Readiness (interview skills, resume preparation, work environment, childcare, transportation); and My Career Connections (MSEP, USAJobs.gov, regional/local employers).
- **Expanding military spouse license and credential portability:** Nearly 35 percent of military spouses in the labor force require licenses or certification for their profession. Many military spouses hold occupational licenses and routinely move across state lines, causing licensing requirements to disproportionately affect the military spouse population.²

² "Supporting Our Military Families: Best Practices for Streamlining Occupational Licensing Across State Lines." Joint Report of the United States Department of Treasury and Department of Defense. http://www.defense.gov/home/pdf/Occupational_Licensing_and_Military_Spouses_Report_vFINAL.PDF.

- **Progress update.** The First Lady and Dr. Biden encouraged all 50 governors to pass legislation by 2014 to reduce the financial and administrative strains that 100,000 military spouses incur from trying to get their state licenses or certification credentials to transfer from state to state as they move. Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden reached out to governors in February 2012 when only 11 states had legislation on the books. Since February of 2012, 17 states have passed spousal licensing legislation, bringing the overall total to 28 states with military spouse licensure measures in place. An additional 15 states have active spouse licensure bills.

Key Measure 2: Increase use of Post-9/11 education programs to obtain degrees, certifications, and credentials.

There were 646,302 Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries in FY12, a marked increase from the 555,329 beneficiaries in FY11.

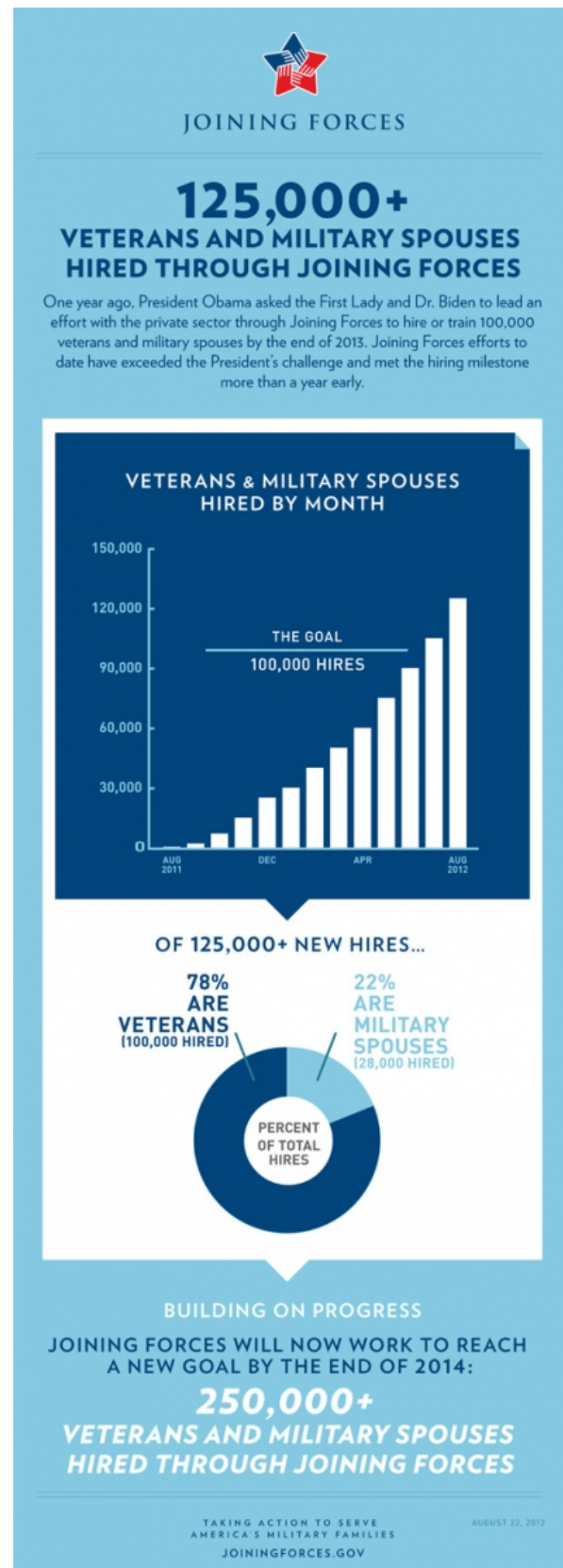
Strategy 3: Partnering with public/private industry to take advantage of the unique skills of veterans. Fostering conditions, both internal and external, that utilize veterans' abilities:

- **Launching the Joining Forces Initiative:** The President issued his challenge to the private sector to hire or train 100,000 veterans or their spouses by the end of 2013. Efforts to encourage private sector hiring have been led by First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden and their Joining Forces initiative.
 - **Progress update.** Since this time, businesses have exceeded this goal by hiring and training more than 125,000 veterans and their spouses. Over 2,100 companies have joined the effort to hire or train an additional 250,000 veterans and their spouses in the years ahead.
- **Creating two new Veterans' tax credits:** In November 2011, the President signed into law two new tax credits for hiring veterans, both of which were included as part of the American Jobs Act. The Returning Heroes tax credit provides an incentive of up to \$5,600 for firms to hire unemployed veterans and the Wounded Warrior tax credit doubled the existing tax credit for long-term unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities to \$9,600.
 - **Progress update.** On January 3rd, 2013, the President signed into law the [American Taxpayer Relief Act](#), which extends these tax credits for one year, until December 31, 2013.
- **Hiring more Veterans in the Federal government:** The Federal government has also helped lead efforts to employ veterans, hiring more than 200,000 veterans since 2009.
 - **Progress update.** In FY2011, there were a total of 229,853 new hires within the federal government. Of these, 65,030 were veterans. This equates to 28.3% veterans of all federal new hires in FY2011.
- **Increasing hiring of Veterans in healthcare-related fields:** The President challenged community health centers to hire 8,000 veterans – approximately one veteran per health center site – over the next three years and the Health Resources and Services Administration pledged to open up career paths beyond nursing and expand opportunities for veterans to become physician assistants. Thanks in part to support from the Affordable Care Act, since the beginning of 2009, health centers across the country have added more than 18,600 new full-time positions in many of the nation's most economically distressed communities. In 2011, they employed more than 138,000 staff, including veterans who serve as physician assistants, administrators, pharmacy directors, outreach workers, eligibility assistance workers, and patient support staff and health center CEOs. In fiscal years 2010 and 2012, \$47.1 million has been invested to support accredited physician assistant training programs
 - **Progress update.** In a preliminary survey of Community Health Center veterans hiring, about 370 health centers responded and reported 200 new jobs for veterans. We are working with HHS to ramp up hiring over the next two years. In August and September of 2012, HHS announced more than \$24 million in grants, with priority given to programs focused on training veterans.

- **Developing online tools to boost Veteran employment:** To connect veterans with employment opportunities posted online, the Department of Labor, in partnership with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, launched the Veterans Jobs Bank, an easy-to-use tool to help veterans find job postings from companies looking to hire them. It already searches over one million job postings and is growing. Additionally, the Department of Labor launched My Next Move for Veterans, a new online resource that allows veterans to enter their military occupation code and discover civilian occupations for which they are well qualified.
 - **Progress update.** Since November 7, 2011, the My Next Move for Veterans website has received more than 542,916 visits through January 31, 2013, with over 1.94 million page views. Additionally, since going live in November of 2011, the Veterans Job Bank has showcased 1.5 million jobs and has supported over 1.2 million job searches.
- **Increasing access to intensive reemployment services:** Post-9/11 veterans are now able to download the Veteran Gold Card, which entitles them to enhanced reemployment services including six months of personalized case management, assessments and career counseling at their local American Job Center.
 - **Progress update.** Approximately 262,889 post-9/11 era veterans were enrolled from November 11, 2011 through December 31, 2012. Of those new enrollments 135,407 were offered and accepted a staff assisted or intensive service within the month of enrollment. This is a 51.51 percent rate of service receipt within the month of enrollment. (Note: Includes self-service and/or virtual enrollments within the overall counts of veterans enrolled.)
- **Connecting military spouses with employers:** Through the Joining Forces initiative, and the Department of Defense's Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP), more than 34,000 military spouses have been hired and more than 450,000 jobs have been posted on the MSEP jobs web portal.

Key Measure 3: Gain 100,000 commitments to hire veterans from the private sector by 2013.

- Since August 2011, more than 125,000 veterans and their spouses have been hired or trained and more than 2,100 companies have joined the effort to hire or train 250,000 additional veterans and their spouses in the years ahead. Included in this commitment is a pledge by the Military Spouse Employment Partnership to employ 50,000 military spouses in the coming years.



Strategy 4: Enable Veteran entrepreneurship. Providing the tools and resources that enable more veteran entrepreneurship:

- **Helping more Veterans start businesses through increased access to capital:** Nine percent of all U.S. firms are owned by veterans and more than 2.4 million veteran-owned businesses employ more than 5.75 million individuals. The Small Business Administration's veteran entrepreneurship program track provides transitioning service members with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to evaluate opportunities and become successful entrepreneurs as they transition out of the military.
 - **Progress update.** In Fiscal Year 2012, SBA supported nearly \$2.1 billion in lending to over 2,800 veteran-owned small businesses, including Patriot Express loans and microloans.
- **Supporting Veteran firms with the new Quick App for Surety Bonds:** In August 2012, SBA announced a new streamlined application to help small business owners bid and compete for contracting opportunities. The "Quick App" for surety bonds under \$250,000 combines two applications into one to make it easier and faster for small businesses and contractors, including veteran-owned small businesses, to compete for contracts.
- **Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business contracting:** The Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Concern Procurement Program allows Federal agencies to set acquisitions aside for exclusive competition among service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns.
 - **Progress update.** For the fifth consecutive year, Federal prime contracting dollars awarded to SDVOSBs increased to \$11.2 billion or 2.65 percent of total contract spending in FY 2011. This is up from \$10.793 billion or 2.50 percent of total contract spending in FY 2010.
- **Veterans Business Outreach Centers:** The Veterans Business Outreach Program (VBOP) is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling and mentoring, and referrals for eligible veterans owning or considering starting a small business. The SBA has provided grants to 15 organizations across the country to serve as Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC).
- **Launching Boots to Business, a public-private partnership to train transitioning service members in entrepreneurship:** The Boots to Business program uses a multi-phased approach to introduce transitioning service members to the fundamentals of small business ownership and to the SBA tools and resources available to them.
 - **Progress update.** Starting in Fiscal Year 2012, SBA developed and piloted its entrepreneurship training program entitled, "Operation Boots to Business: from Service to Startup," at Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and Air Force bases across the country. To date, all four services have hosted B2B entrepreneurship training courses totally nearly 1,000 service member participants in the first quarter of Calendar Year 2013.

Key Measure 4: Increase number of veteran entrepreneurs by 20 percent.

- In Fiscal Year 2011, over 190,000 veterans received small business counseling or training through SBA and its resource partners. In addition, since 2009, SBA has doubled the number of SBA Veteran Business Outreach Centers nationwide.

Next Steps

- The Obama Administration will launch the next phase of its military credentialing and licensing efforts, partnering with the states to streamline state occupational licensing for veterans. The Task Force will continue to work with the states and institutions to streamline licensing for service members and veterans, specifically targeting the occupations of bus and truck drivers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and licensed practical nurses.
- The Obama Administration will outline a suite of best practices, including suggested legislative language, for states to use to ensure that separating service members and veterans receive appropriate licensure and academic credit for their training and experience and do not face other unnecessary barriers to qualifying for employment in high-demand occupations that require certification or licensure.

Future Actions

- The Obama Administration will continue to expand educational opportunities available to veterans who wish to build on their military training and experience and earn degrees to become advanced practice health care providers like physician assistants. Through its grant programs, the Department of Health and Human Services will continue to provide incentives for physician assistant and nursing training programs to enroll veterans, give them credit for their military experience, and provide them with the support they need to successfully complete their education.

Contributing Programs and Other Factors

Agencies contributing in part or in whole to this goal include the following:

- Offices of the First Lady and Dr. Biden (Joining Forces)
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Defense
- Department of Labor
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Small Business Administration

The Federal government is just one of a number of stakeholders that are dedicated to reaching this goal. To accomplish this goal, non-Federal agencies also bring their unique assets to collaborations in order to change the way we support successful veteran reintegration into society.

Additional References

National Resource Directory:

<https://www.nrd.gov/>

eBenefits Portal:

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>

My Next Move for Veterans:

<http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>

Veteran Gold Card:

<http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>

Joining Forces:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces>

Hiring Our Heroes:

<http://www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes>

Veteran Recruiting:

<http://veteranrecruiting.com/>