

New Mexico Vets at Work

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Veterans' Employment Resource Guide



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Navigating the World of Work as a U.S. Veteran

Your service to this country cannot be underestimated, nor should it be undervalued. Whether you're facing your transition from military service or you left active duty a long time ago, we want you to have the information and resources you need to find meaningful employment opportunities and build an employment future that ensures your long-term success.

Transitioning to
Civilian Life

Next Steps

Education

Looking for Work
and Landing the Job

Employment
Resources

In This Guide...

This guide, organized into the following five topic sections, provides tools, resources, and information on employment and employment-related topics and is developed specifically for our nation's veterans.

Making the Transition to Civilian Life



Learn about some of the best resources to use when transitioning to civilian life. Some resources are targeted toward service members preparing to leave active-duty service, while others are meant for all veterans, no matter when they served.

Planning Your Next Career Steps



Learn how to build your civilian career path by assessing what you want, exploring your career options, planning for your career future, and building your path forward. Arm yourself with the tools necessary to make informed decisions about your future in the civilian workforce.

Continuing Your Education



Learn about your education options and how to decide whether more education is right for you. You'll find information on how to pursue more education and the benefits, resources, and services available to veterans nationwide and in New Mexico.

Looking for Work and Landing the Job



Learn about the steps of the job search process and how to ensure employment success when entering the civilian workforce. Read about the employment benefits you've earned and industries and businesses that actively recruit and hire veterans. Discover employment resources just for veterans and find information on your employment rights.

Understanding Other Employment Resources



Learn about other resources available to veterans on navigating the workforce and life after military service, like veteran hiring initiatives and veteran-owned business resources. You'll also find information on employment-related programs, services, and resources for veterans facing homelessness.

Each section includes several articles that are filled with information and specific tools. Website addresses are provided within each article and an Acronym Glossary is included at the end of this guide to assist you in navigating the resources and tools mentioned.

Before you jump into this guide, be aware of some of the best resources available to veterans in New Mexico—your Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists. Your LVERs and DVOP Specialists are available at your local New Mexico Workforce Connection office to assist you. A list of New Mexico Workforce Connection offices is on the back cover of this guide.

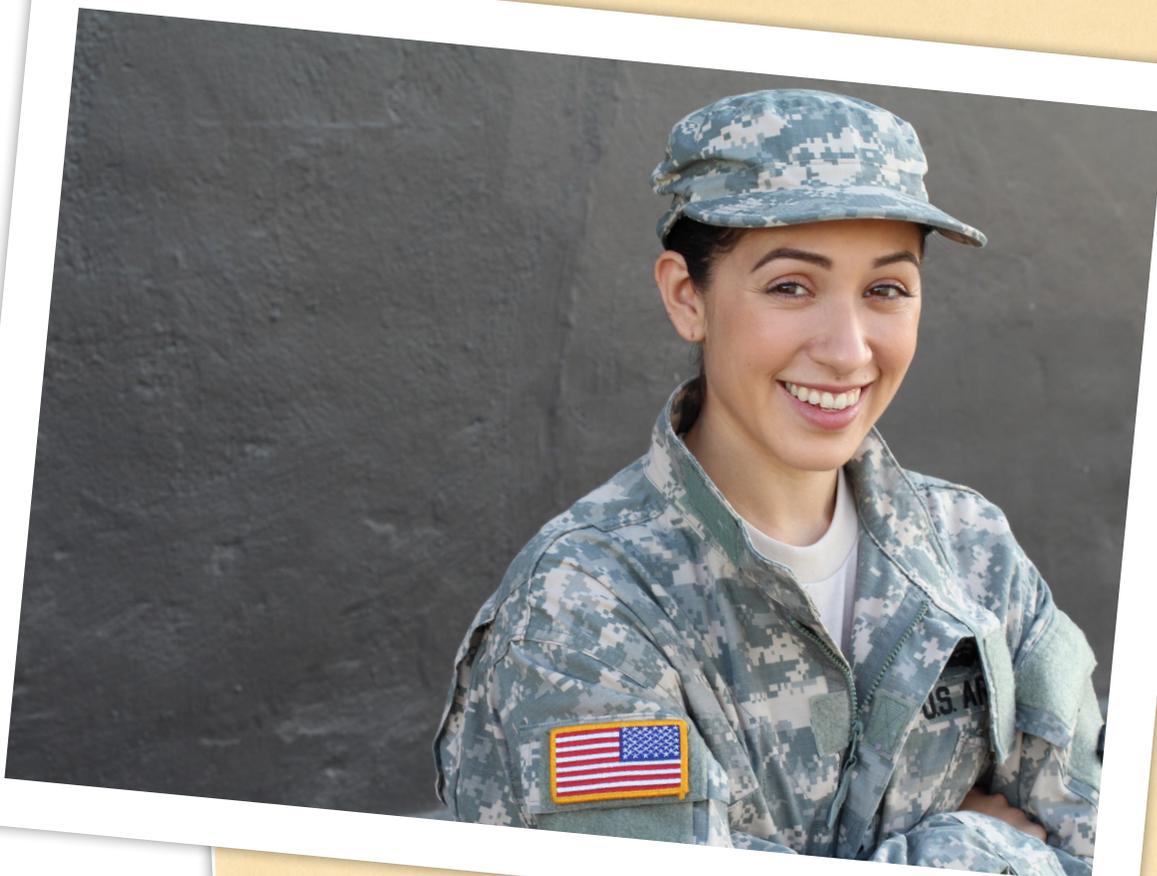
The New Mexico Veterans Employment Guide is a resource produced by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' Economic Research and Analysis Bureau.



Making the Transition to Civilian Life

Get Assistance With Your Transition

There are many resources available to help you with your transition to civilian life. Some are targeted toward service members preparing to leave active-duty, while others are meant for all veterans, no matter when they served. Different programs and agencies provide different services, with many providing those services across multiple topics. Educate yourself on these resources and how to access them. Many resources are mentioned throughout this guide, so take a look and see which resources will help you.



Pre-Separation Resources

The absolute best advice for preparing for your separation is to **START EARLY**. Begin thinking about your separation at least one year before you leave military service. Take advantage of any resources that will assist with your transition. Don't forget that this will be a transition for your spouse/partner and family as well, so keep an eye out for resources specific to military family members.

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is a resource provided by the U.S. Departments of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Small Business Administration (SBA), in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Department of Education. It is one of the best, if not the best, pre-separation resources for veterans and their families. Here is more information on the program and how to use it to help you and your family navigate this significant life change.

Transition Assistance Program

TAP provides training and skills development through its Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) curriculum. Through mandatory and optional workshops based on each service member's unique plans for his/her transition, TAP will help you navigate the transition process and access any and all benefits you've earned through your service to our country. You will begin your transition process by completing your DD Form 2648 or DD 2648-1 (for Reserves), also known as your Pre-Separation Counseling Checklist.

Certain TAP workshops are mandatory for service members, including Reservists and Guardsmen separating after 180 days of continuous active duty. Mandatory workshops provide assistance and guidance on: personal finances, family adjustments, VA benefits, mentorship, employment, resume writing, job interviews, and the job search. Other TAP workshops are optional and include resources related to: your education, career technical training and certifications, and entrepreneurship.

Workshops are developed around Career Readiness Standards so that separating service members can demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills and knowledge to pursue a successful transition. TAP is standardized across all military services, but services have some flexibility in how TAP is delivered to its members. Upon completion of TAP you will receive a DD Form 2958 (Service Member's Individual Transition Plan Checklist) to document your career readiness standards.

The Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP) is available for veterans with

TAP program websites:

- **Air Force TAP** | <http://www.afpc.af.mil/Transition-Assistance-Program>
- **Army Soldier for Life, TAP** | www.sfl-tap.army.mil
- **Coast Guard TAP** | https://www.uscg.mil/worklife/transition_assistance.asp
- **Marine Corps Transition Readiness Program** | <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/index.cfm/services/career/transition-readiness/>
- **Navy TAP** | www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program/transition_assistance.html

service-connected disabilities. DTAP includes standard TAP workshops plus additional hours of individual instruction to address the specific needs of disabled veterans.

To find detailed information on TAP, go to <https://www.dodtap.mil>. For information on TAP at New Mexico's military installations, visit one of the following:

- **Cannon AFB:** <http://www.cannon.af.mil/Home/TransitionAssistanceProgram.aspx>
- **Holloman AFB:** <http://www.holloman.af.mil/AboutUs/FactSheets/Display/tabid/6317/Article/317274/airman-and-family-readiness-center.aspx>
- **Kirtland AFB:** <http://www.kirtland.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/825957/transition-assistance-program/>
- **White Sands Missile Range (WSMR):** <http://whitesands.armymwr.com/us/whitesands/programs/arm> (WSMR is the hub in New Mexico for Fort Bliss and the U.S. Army TAP)

General Separation Resources

There are many other separation resources beyond TAP that are available to military service members and veterans. Here are some of the best, including several that provide resources for veterans of any age and veterans who are well beyond their separation.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services

The VA is really the main source for veteran-related information, resources, and tools. Its website is comprehensive and gives a large amount of information related to the benefits you've earned and the resources the VA and its partners provide to veterans nationwide. To help you navigate that information, the VA also has developed an excellent interactive tool for veterans to use. And when you need a little more help, the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) and the staff at its field offices are there.

VA Overview

The VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) provides benefits, services, and resources to veterans and their families. Benefits fall under many categories, including:

- **Compensation**
- **Education and training**
- **Vocational rehabilitation and employment**
- **Home loans**
- **Life insurance**
- **Pensions**
- **Transition, employment, and economic impact**
- **Benefits available to special veteran groups (e.g., elderly, homeless, incarcerated)**
- **Readjustment counseling**

You can access detailed information on the VBA's website at www.benefits.va.gov/benefits. Or, you can delve into the VA's interactive resource tool at www.vets.gov. This website is designed to get you the information and answers you need quickly and easily. Information is organized into four different sections: Disability Benefits, Education Benefits, Careers and Employment, and Health Care. You'll hear more about www.vets.gov throughout this guide, so make sure to check it out.

NMDVS

How you'll apply for VA benefits will vary by benefit. That's why it's important to know about NMDVS and its field offices. NMDVS provides information on state and federal resources and benefits for veterans. Local field offices employ accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) to assist veterans and their dependents with filing for their federal and state benefits. NMDVS also collaborates with other agencies to host job fairs, business conferences, seminars, summits, and Stand Downs.

The Downtown Albuquerque field office serves as the Regional Benefit Office, but there are 14 other field offices with VSOs available to help you. To learn more about NMDVS and to locate an NMDVS office and VSO near you, visit www.nmdvs.org.

VA Vet Center Program

The Vet Center Program is offered through the VA to welcome home war veterans with honor by providing quality readjustment counseling in a caring manner. Readjustment counseling can include individual and group counseling, family counseling, bereavement counseling, military sexual trauma counseling, outreach and education, substance abuse assessment and referral, employment assessment and referral, VBA benefits explanation and referral, and screening and referral for medical issues. Services are available to veterans, services members, and their families. There are four Vet Centers in New Mexico—one each in Albuquerque, Farmington, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe. For more information, go to <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp>.

Service-Specific Resources

Each military service provides assistance and resources to veterans outside of TAP. Here are select websites where you can find information based on your military service.

Army Soldier for Life,
<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/veterans>

My Army Benefits,
<http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>

Air Force Personnel Center,
<https://www.afpc.af.mil/air-force-veteran-information>

Air Force Retiree Services,
www.retirees.af.mil

**Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS)
 Marine for Life Network,**
www.usmc-mccs.org/services/career/marine-for-life-network

Navy Personnel Command,
<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/Pages/default.aspx>

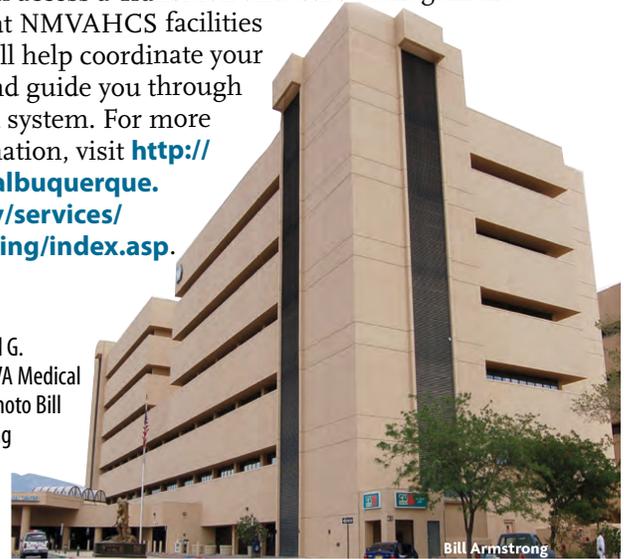
U.S. Coast Guard Retiree Services,
www.uscg.mil/retiree

The New Mexico VA Health Care System

The New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) offers health services to veterans. NMVAHCS operates out of the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Albuquerque and 13 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Alamogordo, Artesia, Española, Farmington, Gallup, Las Vegas, Raton, Río Rancho, Santa Fe, Silver City, Taos, and Truth or Consequences. For more information and to find a clinic near you, visit <http://www.albuquerque.va.gov/index.asp>.

If you're a post-9/11 veteran who served during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and/or Operation New Dawn (OND), you can access a Transition and Care Management Team at NMVAHCS facilities that will help coordinate your care and guide you through the VA system. For more information, visit <http://www.albuquerque.va.gov/services/returning/index.asp>.

Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center, Photo Bill Armstrong



Keeping Track of Your Documents

You'll need certain documents from your military life for your transition into civilian life. The first thing you should do is make sure you have your DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty). You might also consider registering your DD Form 214 with your county clerk. By doing this, you'll always be able to get an official copy when you need it. New Mexico Statute 14-8-9.1 ensures that your DD Form 214 and all the information included will be protected and kept private. It is not treated as a public record. You'll need your DD Form 214 to apply for any veteran-specific benefits. To request your military service records, go to www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/. Also make sure you gather any documentation on collateral appointments, promotions, and performance evaluations you received during your active-duty service. Keep electronic (scanned) and hard copy records so that the documents will be easily available when you apply for jobs.



General Separation Resources (continued)

U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment & Training Service

This guide has an entire section on employment and training services for veterans. One of the best resources is the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). VETS provides numerous resources for veterans, both online and in your community. It is unique in that you can get assistance with your job search and career planning in person through New Mexico Workforce Connection offices around the state. Here are summaries of the major services and resources offered through VETS.

Your LVERs and DVOP Specialists

VETS services are offered at almost all New Mexico Workforce Connection offices in New Mexico. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists are there to assist you with your transition into the civilian workforce. The primary duties of LVERs include conducting outreach to employers, facilitating job search workshops, and providing employment and training services to veterans. DVOP Specialists focus on providing intensive services with priority to special disabled, disabled veterans, and other eligible veterans. VETS services are available individually and through workshops and are particularly helpful because they can be customized and provided to you in person.

To find a local Workforce Connection office near you, visit www.dws.state.nm.us/Office-Locations or view the NEW MEXICO WORKFORCE CONNECTION OFFICES listing on the back cover of this guide.

Online Resources Through VETS

Much of the information provided in this guide is available in more depth and with personalized assistance when you work with an LVER or DVOP Specialist. Your LVERs and DVOP Specialists will also use several online resources when helping you. DOL offers VETS Program employment and training services online at www.va.gov, while the State of New Mexico offers services at www.jobs.state.nm.us (New Mexico Workforce Connection). Both resources offer similar services, including:

- Online job searches
- Resume and cover letter preparation assistance
- Interviewing and job negotiation tips
- Career exploration and skills matching tools
- Training and education provider listings

New Mexico Workforce Connection is unique because it provides customized employment services. Your career and employment activities can be saved to your personal online account so that you can access and update your information at any time. Any online activities you engage in can be saved, and you can even apply for jobs and follow up with employers through the website. Your LVER or DVOP Specialist can assist you in creating your account and learning about and using all of the resources available.

E-Vets Resource Advisor

DOL's e-VETS Resource Advisor assists veterans, service members, and those who support them to quickly and easily navigate information and resources on a variety of topics, including:

- **Benefits and compensation**
- **Education and training**
- **Employment**
- **Family and caregiver support**
- **Health**
- **Homeless assistance**
- **Housing**
- **Transportation and travel**
- **Other services and resources**
- **State-specific information and resources**

The e-VETS Resource Advisor is one of the best resources to find information on a wide variety of veteran-related benefits and issues because information is available in one location. To access e-VETS Resource Advisor, visit <http://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/evets.htm>.

The Gold Card

The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with intensive follow-up employment and training services. Present your Gold Card at your local Workforce Connection office to receive these services. To learn more about the gold card and to print yours, go to <https://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>.



Recovery & Employment Assistance Lifelines (REALifelines) Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor

The Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor, developed by VETS, provides valuable information and access to contact information and online employment assistance and online resources to assist transitioning service members and veterans in their reintegration into the civilian workforce. To learn more, visit <http://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/VeteransCareerTransition.htm>.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

GOLD CARD

SERVICES FOR POST 9/11 ERA VETERANS

The One Stop Career Centers are ready to provide you intensive services for up to a six month period through an exciting array of career and supportive services to include:

- Case management
- Skills assessment and interest surveys
- Career guidance
- Job search assistance

★ ★ ★

HOW TO ACCESS GOLD CARD SERVICES?

- Information about Gold Card Services can be found at www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html.
- Locate your nearest One Stop Career Center by going to America's Service Locator www.servicelocator.org or by calling Toll-Free 1-877-US2-JOBS (1-877-872-5627) TTY: 1-877-889-5627.
- Once a One-Stop Career Center has been located, go there and present this Card.
- Information about other services and benefits can be found at www.ebenefits.va.gov and www.nrd.gov.

Eligible Veterans will receive priority of service in all Department of Labor funded employment and training programs





Planning Your Next Career Steps

Career Exploration and Planning

Your service in the military provided you with skills and experience that will be valuable in the civilian workforce. But you may be wondering how those skills and experience can be transferred to a civilian career. You might also be asking yourself whether you want to build directly on your military skills and experience or use them to move in a completely new career direction.



Before you start looking for work or pursuing additional education:

ASSESS your skills and interests.

EXPLORE civilian careers and learn about occupations that require skills similar to those you gained during active duty.

PLAN for your next career steps by comparing your career options.

BUILD your career path by making decisions on education, employment, and other options.

“The best advice is: utilize any resources available to you, stay organized, keep track of your progress, and keep focused on you career goals and plans.”

The process of assessing what you want, exploring your options, planning for your career future, and building your path forward is called **Career Exploration and Planning**. Because career exploration and planning means making big decisions about your future, it can be difficult for people of all ages and experience levels. But it is one of the most important things you can do to ensure that you head down a career path that is right for you. You’ll be investing a lot of time, energy, and resources into your career, so make sure you narrow down what you want before you move too quickly in one direction.

This article takes you through four main steps of career exploration and planning. These steps are usually taken together, as you learn more about yourself and what you want from a career. The best advice is: utilize any resources available to you, stay organized, keep track of your progress, and keep focused on you career goals and plans.

What’s the difference between a job, an occupation, and a career?

You might have many jobs within an occupation and many jobs within a career. A career or occupation usually refers to a type of work, while a job refers to a specific position with an employer.

A JOB IS:
Work for pay that may or may not relate to your occupation or career.

JOBS EXAMPLE:
Mechanical Engineer at XYZ company
Engineering Manager at ABC Engineering

AN OCCUPATION IS:
A category of jobs with similar duties, education and training, and work settings.

OCCUPATION EXAMPLE:
Mechanical Engineer

A CAREER IS:
A combination of your education, training, work, and volunteering over a lifetime.

CAREER EXAMPLE:
A licensed mechanical engineer who advanced into engineering-specific management and marketing positions over time.



Assess Your Skills and Interests

Before you start exploring career options, consider what types of jobs you might be interested in and look at jobs that line up with the work you were doing during active duty. There are different ways to assess your skills and interests, including making lists, using assessment tools, and using tools to match your skills to civilian occupations. Document your assessment process as you go.

Get Started With Your Assessment

Make a list of interests and strengths. Write down the types of work, hobbies, and volunteering that you enjoy and that you're good at. Include specific tasks as well as more general types of activities.

Make a list of professional goals. Write down professional goals, such as how much money you'd like to make, the education you're willing to pursue, and other aspects of employment that are important to you (e.g., flexible work hours, office versus non-office work environments, working with people or working alone).

Make a list of your job experience. List your military occupation specialty (MOS) or specialties and titles, as well as duties and responsibilities during active service. Include job titles and experience outside of your military career if applicable.

List your interests, skills, goals, and experience.



Get Guidance With Assessment Tools

Take Interest and Skills Assessments. Career assessments give you a better idea of the types of jobs and activities that are a good fit for you. They won't tell you what career to pursue, but they will point to careers you might want to explore. When you match the results of your assessments with your skills and interests lists, you'll start finding occupations that match what you want.

New Mexico Workforce Connection has two assessments you can take—the **Work Interest Analyzer** and **Work Values Analyzer**. The Work Interest Analyzer asks you to answer questions related to six interest areas, while the Work Values Analyzer asks you to rank different aspects of work based on what's most important to you. To take these assessments, go to www.jobs.state.nm.us. Select *Career Services* from the left-hand navigation menu and then select *Career Explorer*. Finally, select *Match Your Work Interests and Work Values*. Create an account or sign into your existing account to save your assessment results.

Match Your Skills and Interests

Identify your skills and find occupations that suite you. Another way to learn about civilian occupations that might be right for you is to use skills matching tools. The New Mexico Workforce Connection website can help.

New Mexico Workforce Connection: Match Your Job Skills and Match Your Personal Skills Resources

Go to www.jobs.state.nm.us.

Click the **Individuals** button OR sign into your individual account.

Select **Career Services** from the left-hand drop-down navigation menu.

Select **Career Explorer**.

Select **Match Your Skills**.

Select **Your Job Skills** or select **Your Personal Skills**



Your Job Skills: Match your skills based on an occupation you've saved OR an occupation of your choice. (You can even use your military occupation.) Choose whether you want to see occupations that closely, moderately, or loosely match your job skills.

Your Personal Skills: Select your personal skills from the listings shown. Choose whether you want to see occupations that closely, moderately, or loosely match your personal skills.

The VA's **Military Skills Translator** at <https://www.vets.gov/employment/job-seekers/skills-translator> (available through the VA's vets.gov website) is another great resource for matching your skills. When you enter your branch of service and MOS, you'll see a list of skills typically required for that MOS. You can then add those to your master list of skills.

Match Your Military Occupations

Match the military occupation(s) you had in the service with civilian occupations. This is a very important part of career exploration and planning because it creates a starting point for thinking about civilian occupations. You don't have to pursue an occupation that closely matches your military occupation. But it's important to know what those occupations are so you can get an idea of what you are and aren't interested in. There are two websites that help you tie your military occupation(s) to civilian occupations.



Military occupations vary greatly, and many of the skills you obtained in the service can transfer to civilian jobs. Dylan, a military working dog with the 49th Security Forces Squadron, gets a routine dental cleaning at the veterinary clinic at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M. Dec. 13, 2016. A veterinarian is on station 24/7 to assure the health of the dogs. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Alexis P. Docherty)



Senior Airman Justin Graham, a 49th Maintenance Squadron Aerospace Ground Equipment technician, repairs an air conditioning unit at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., on Jan. 12, 2017. Holloman's AGE Airmen perform a wide variety of maintenance duties in support of aircraft maintenance and flying operations. They inspect, test, and operate AGE, from air conditioners to complex generators, to ensure equipment serviceability. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Alexis P. Docherty)

New Mexico Workforce Connection Match Your Occupation Resource

Go to www.jobs.state.nm.us.

- Click the Individuals button OR sign into your individual account.
- Select Career Services from the left-hand drop-down navigation menu.
- Select Career Explorer.
- Select Match Your Occupation.
- Select Occupations by Military Specialty among the tabs at the top of the selection menu.
- Choose your branch of service, personnel category, and military occupation code (MOC).



Military Occupation Crosswalk from O*Net OnLine

Go to <https://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/> to enter your branch and either your MOC code or occupation title. The crosswalk will give you a listing of civilian occupations that most closely match your previous military occupation.



Measure Your Workforce Readiness

Consider Taking Workforce Readiness Assessments.

WorkKeys® is a skills assessment that measures your workforce readiness. Test questions focus on three main categories—Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. You may also be able to take assessments for Applied Technology, Business Writing, Listening for Understanding, and Workplace Observation. WorkKeys assessment results are evidence of your skills, and you can use that evidence to market yourself to potential employers. Visit <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/Business/Resources/WorkKeys> and contact your local Workforce Connection office and LVER/DVOP Specialist to find out more.



2.

Explore Civilian Careers

Once you've identified civilian occupations that match your military experience and know the types of work activities and environments you prefer, it's time to start learning more about different civilian careers. There are a few ways to start investigating.

Review Your List of Occupations

Review your list of civilian occupations that: (1) you think you're interested in; (2) you learned about by taking assessments; and (3) are matches to your military occupation(s). Decide which of these occupations you want to learn more about. Add any occupations you think you might be interested in but that aren't on these lists.

Use Labor Market Information to Learn About Occupations

Find out more about the occupations you might be interested in. Visit the New Mexico Workforce Connection website at www.jobs.state.nm.us to use the **Career Informer** resource.

New Mexico Workforce Connection: Career Informer resource

Go to www.jobs.state.nm.us.

Click the **Job Seeker** button OR sign into your individual account.

Select **Career Services** from the left-hand drop-down navigation menu.

Select **Career Informer**.



Choose how you'd like to search for an occupation using the tabs at the top of the selection section. (You can also choose your location for area-specific information.) Notice that if you're signed into your individual account, you'll see *Current User Statistics* at the bottom of the page. You can see which occupations you've reviewed already, and you can easily revisit those occupations at any time. This is also an easy way to keep track of occupations within New Mexico Workforce Connection.

Use Other Ways to Explore Careers

Volunteer, intern, job shadow, and interview people to learn more about certain careers. Let's be honest. The internet isn't going to be the only resource you use when making career choices and decisions. The most valuable career exploration happens when you network, volunteer, intern, and simply talk to other people about their careers. Volunteering and interning are also great ways to gain experience and get your foot in the door at a company or agency. See **OTHER WAYS TO EXPLORE CAREERS (PAGE 17)** for more information on these types of opportunities.



3.

Plan for Your Next Steps

As you learn more about occupations, you'll start narrowing down the list of occupations you're interested in. All of the work you did in assessing your skills and interests will pay off as you realize you have a better understanding of what you're looking for and the career path that might be right for you. Here are a few things to do when narrowing your focus.

Compare Your List of Occupations

Compare occupations to start narrowing your focus. You've assessed and matched your skills and interests. You've found civilian occupations you might be interested in. You've learned more about those occupations. You have a lot of information, but how do you narrow down your list of occupations so that you can start planning your future and preparing for the civilian workforce?

Start by reviewing occupation-specific information. Make notes on statistics for the occupations you're most interested by using the **Career Informer** resource on the New Mexico Workforce Connection Website. Here are some questions to ask yourself when looking at the information.

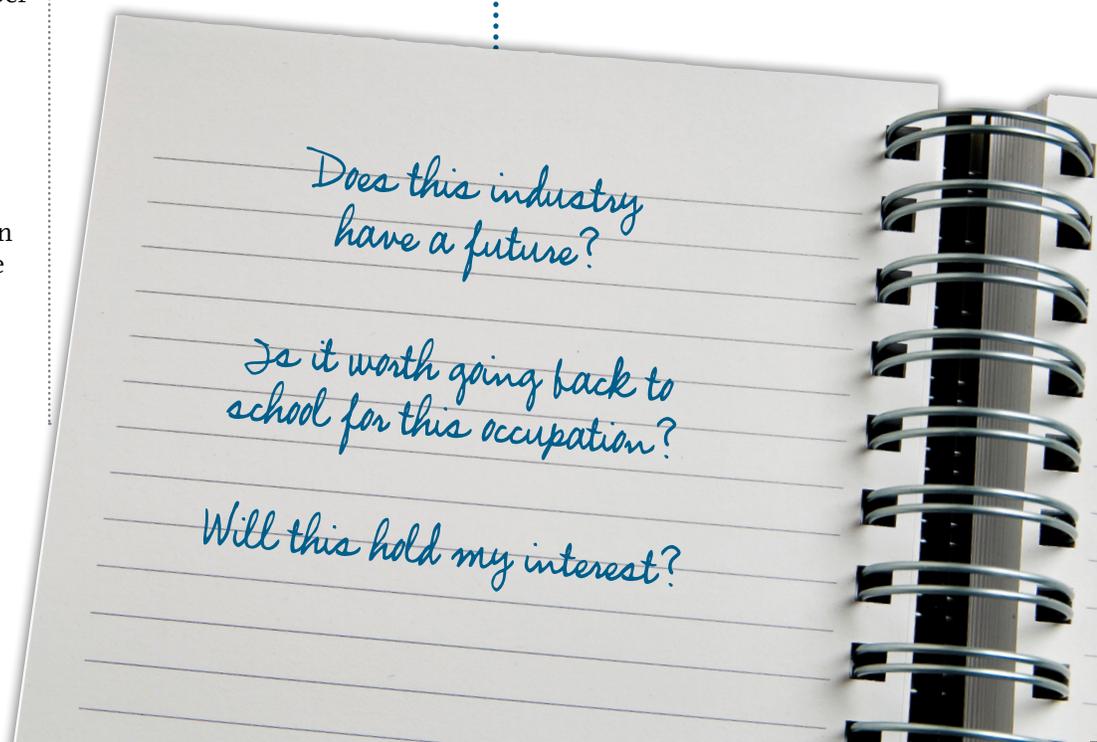
- Would the entry, median, and experienced wages be satisfying to you and make you feel financially secure?** Check the wages of your occupations and answer this question for each.
- Does it look like there will be jobs in the occupation in the future?** Look to see how many job openings there are projected to be in the future and see if the number of openings seems high or low.
- Are you willing to get the education needed for the occupation?** Compare the minimum required education of the occupation with the education you have now. Do you need more education and are you willing to go back to school?
- Do the job duties, work activities, and work tasks seem interesting to you?** Review what you would be doing within the occupation and think about whether it would be interesting, challenging, and rewarding to you.

- Do the work interests and values line up with you assessment results?** Review the occupation's work values and interests and see whether they match with your initial assessment and guided assessment results from the **Work Interest Analyzer** and **Work Values Analyzer**.

Focus Your Priorities and Review Your Resources

Review your initial assessment and use your lists to help you set priorities. A lot goes into deciding what's most important to you in a career. Use your initial assessment lists to set your priorities and see which occupations will help you best meet those priorities.

Think about career resources that are available. This could include educational opportunities and assistance and personal networks and connections. If there are resources that can make it easier for you to pursue and succeed in certain occupations and career paths, you might want to give them additional consideration.



4.

Build Your Path

You don't have to narrow down your interests to one single occupation or career before you take your next steps. You might want to make decisions about education and employment before you know exactly what you want to do next. That's OK. Work with family, friends, and mentors to decide how you'll move forward on broad education and employment goals. Even if you don't know where you'll end up, having a clear plan will increase your chances of succeeding at whatever you do.

Make Decisions on Education and Employment

Tie your education and employment decisions to your long-term career goals. You've explored careers and are ready to take action. Try to base education and employment decisions primarily on what you'll need to do to begin a career in your chosen occupation. If you haven't narrowed your list of occupations down to one, look at whether similar education or work experience is needed for several of your occupations.

If you will be looking for work right away, try to focus your search on jobs that will help move you forward in your career. If the career path you've chosen doesn't require more education, you'll probably be applying for jobs that are entry- to mid-level, based on how closely the occupation ties to the experience you got in the military. You might

also look at positions that will be "stepping stones" for your long-term career—positions that will get you experience and help move you up your career ladder. If you'll be going to school and working, it's a good idea to look for positions that will either help you gain experience in your chosen career field and/or provide financial support and flexibility while you attend school.

Consider a Different Path

Look into non-traditional career choices. As a veteran, you already chose one alternative path when you joined the military. There are other career options you can consider as a veteran, including registered apprenticeships, AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, and starting your own business. See **OTHER CAREER OPTIONS (PAGE 19)** to learn more about other ways to explore careers and gain experience.

Plan for Your Education

Know what you need and know about your options. Make your transition into education as smooth as possible by being prepared. Base your education decisions on what education is needed to enter the career field you've chosen. Then decide how to get that education. There are many different options to consider, such as traditional college, online degrees, and apprenticeship. As a veteran, you will also need to navigate the education benefits you've earned. See **CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION (PAGE 22)** to learn more about planning for and getting the education you need.

Plan for the Job Search

Getting a job can be a job itself! Before you dive into the job search, learn about strategies that will help you prepare and put your best foot forward. Make sure to utilize the resources available to you not only as a job seeker, but as a veteran job seeker. See **8 STEPS OF THE JOB SEARCH (PAGE 32)** to learn more about planning to enter the civilian workforce and successfully looking for work and applying for jobs.

Be Financially Prepared

Whether you're going to school, looking for work, or both, you'll need to create a budget. Make sure you include in your budget any benefits you receive (e.g., pension, education assistance, disability compensation). Work with your family to identify all sources of income available. Research occupational wages to see if what you want to earn lines up with what you will likely earn.



Other Ways to Explore Careers

This article lists a few other ways to explore career options that are just as valuable as taking career assessments, matching your skills, and researching occupations.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an interview where you ask another person about their career. This is not an interview for a job. It's a conversation where you learn the ins and outs of a career and get real-world insight on what to expect. Informational interviews can open your eyes to career options you hadn't considered or even help you find out which careers you're definitely not interested in.

Who Should You Interview?

Interview people in occupations and careers you're interested in. Talk to people in different stages of their career; supervisors and people with a lot of experience will have a different perspective than people who are just starting out. Think about family, friends, teachers, other veterans, and mentors that you can interview or who can introduce you to people you can interview.

Internships

An internship is an opportunity to gain experience in a specific career or industry by working for a company or organization for a fixed, limited period of time. Just like your military experience, internship experience is real-world experience that will give you a competitive edge when applying for college/training programs or jobs. An internship will also help you narrow down the list of careers you're interested in and give you critical networking resources.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has a great resource for those looking to intern. **Internships | Students Work** (www.dws.state.nm.us/internships) is the central online hub linking students and job seekers to employers offering career experience opportunities, including internships. On Internships | Students Work, you can browse internship opportunities, prepare application materials, apply for internships, and connect with employers.

5 Tips for Informational Interviewing

1. **Keep the informational interview to 20 or 30 minutes and be on time.**
2. **Prepare a list of questions to take to the interview.**
3. **Dress appropriately, like you would for a job interview.**
4. **Always follow up with the person within 24 hours of the interview to thank him/her.**
5. **Stay in contact with the person you interviewed. This is a great networking opportunity!**



Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to gain experience, keep busy, engage yourself in the community, meet new people, and build your resume. It also lets you try out the career you're interested in before making a major commitment. The people you volunteer with can serve as professional references to attest to your abilities. And if you're unemployed or between jobs, volunteering is a great way to account for any gaps in your employment.

5 Reasons to Intern

1. **Gain Experience:** As you learned through your military experience, many skills are best learned on the job. An internship will give you a head-start on developing the skills you need for a chosen civilian career.
2. **Learn About Professional Settings:** The professional environment is very different than the military environment. Get comfortable interacting and engaging in the civilian workforce and using your military experience as an asset in the workplace.
3. **Get Insight:** Test the waters in a career to see if it's right for you before you invest in more education or find a full-time job.
4. **Expand Your Network:** Make positive connections with people and start to build the professional network that will be invaluable throughout your career.
5. **Find Employment Opportunities:** Many companies look to their interns when hiring for permanent positions.

Job Shadowing

When you job shadow, you follow someone through his/her work day to observe the ins and outs of the job. Your job-shadow experience can be a few hours long or last up to several weeks. It all depends on the situation and the person you shadow. Like an informational interview, you will get an insider's view of the job.

A job-shadowing experience can come from an informational interview or from others in your network. Some companies and organizations have formal job-shadowing programs. Think about people in your network that can help set up a job-shadowing experience.

5 Tips on Job Shadowing

1. Remember that the person you shadow is going out of his/her way to include you in a busy work schedule, so be appreciative.
2. Learn as much about the company or organization as you can before you shadow an employee. (Researching its website is a great place to start.)
3. Dress the same as you would for an interview and be on time.
4. Observe as much as you can, not just about the person's tasks, but also about the company culture. Take notes!
5. Always follow up with and thank the company or organization and the person you shadowed within 24 hours of your job shadowing experience.

Networking

Networking means interacting with other people to exchange information and develop contacts, especially to further one's career. The key to having a successful network is to start now! Anyone can be in your network—friends, neighbors, family, teachers, other veterans, employers. Build your network to make sure you have resources for job postings, recommendations, references, and advice. Start by building personal relationships with people you meet early on and nurture those relationships (keep in touch over time).

You already have the beginnings of a network. Make a list of people that you know, both inside and outside of the military. Then make a plan to develop your relationship. Don't forget to network in person and online.

Where to Network

- School and professional organizations
- Volunteering opportunities
- Family, personal friendships, and acquaintances
- Job fairs and career centers
- Military or veterans groups
- Social Media

Research Your Network

Research the companies or organizations of people in your network. Know what they do so you can ask them why they do it. Knowing a little about a person will help you talk to them and develop your relationship.

Be Visible

Don't blend into the background. Make sure you talk with others and speak up in groups at events and meetings. You might be nervous talking to people you don't know, but practice makes perfect. Think of questions you can ask someone to get a conversation started.

Networking Through Social Media

Social networking, the right way, can increase your exposure to career opportunities. But keep in mind that employers research applicants online. Many candidates haven't been hired based on information on their social sites. Keep your online image appropriate to the job you want to have. Here are some tips for using social networks:

- Follow companies, professional groups, and career services that are in your career field or a career field you're interested in.
- Connect with people you know in the profession, including old coworkers, experts, and people you want to work with.
- Update your profile regularly with relevant industry and job-related information.
- Engage in group discussions and message boards and post links to news and articles relevant to your career field.
- Keep your online image appropriate. Nothing online is ever completely private, so don't post something (or be tagged in something) that may prevent you from getting a job in the future.

Currently, LinkedIn is the most popular professional networking site. Veterans receive a free one-year subscription to LinkedIn. Go to <https://linkedinforgood.linkedin.com/programs/veterans/premiumform> to learn more.



Other Career Options

There's no one career path that is right for everyone and your path doesn't have to be a traditional one. Some of the most rewarding career moves come from thinking outside of the box. Here are a few different career options you can consider. Some are more temporary and will be a stepping stone in your career, while others are longer-term opportunities. All will provide you with experience and expand your employment and career options.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 men and women in intensive service each year at more than 15,000 locations across the country, including nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups. AmeriCorps members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Members gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and the experience has a lasting impact on the members and the communities they serve.

AmeriCorps service should not jeopardize any veterans compensation you receive, including VA educational benefits. (See **EDUCATION BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES (PAGE 26)** for more information.)

AmeriCorps consists of three main programs:

AmeriCorps State and National

AmeriCorps State and National members serve with national and local nonprofit and community groups to support a wide range of local service programs that address critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. For information go to <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-programs/ameriCorps-state-and-national>.

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve full time in supporting community efforts to overcome poverty. For more information visit, the AmeriCorps VISTA website at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-vista>.

National Civilian Conservation Corps (NCCC)

NCCC is a team-based residential program for young adults 18 to 24 who carry out projects full time in public safety, the environment, youth development, and disaster relief and preparedness. For more information, visit the NCCC website at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-nccc>.



AmeriCorps members help landowners sustain their lands.
Corporation for National and Community Service



An AmeriCorps member with Fire 6 maintains trail in Big Bend National Park in Texas.
Corporation for National and Community Service

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps is one of the most recognized volunteer organizations in the country. It was established in the 1960s to promote peace and help individuals all over the world build a better life for themselves and their communities. Over 220,000 Americans have served in over 140 countries. Many veterans, particularly those who retired from the military, choose to continue serving their country by joining the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps volunteers make a 27-month commitment, and volunteers work on a variety of projects with the community, small businesses, local governments, and schools. Volunteer participation can range

from HIV/AIDS education to projects that promote sustainable development; it all depends on the needs of the community. Projects and programs are continuously changing to address global needs as they arise. Volunteers receive foreign language education, international experience, and technical training. Visit the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov for more information.



“Registered apprenticeship programs usually last from one to five years, and apprentices receive a nationally-recognized certificate of completion at the end of the program.”

Registered Apprenticeships

A registered apprenticeship is one of the best opportunities to get hands-on training and classroom education in a skilled trade. Apprentices learn their skilled trade while working on the job. Registered apprenticeship programs usually last from one to five years, and apprentices receive a nationally-recognized certificate of completion at the end of the program. During your apprenticeship, you will either be trained by a master craftsman or an expert in the field. You'll earn wages as you learn and will be getting work experience starting from day one.

Your VA education benefits can be applied to registered apprenticeship programs. If you think you might be interested in apprenticeship, visit the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' apprenticeship program website at <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Apprenticeship>.





Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is someone who takes an idea and transforms it into an opportunity. As an entrepreneur, you start your own business.

Entrepreneurs are risk-takers, and they have to consider those risks prior to launching their company. If you have an idea that you'd like to turn into a business, here's where to start:

Choose the Right Path for You

Entrepreneurship usually starts with an idea. But, you need to keep an open mind and really think about different business options to get an idea off the ground. Listen to yourself and your intuition. Start by thinking about what you know. Then research what other people are doing. Look at different types of businesses and business models. Finally, think about how your idea would solve a problem, bridge a gap, or fill a need. You'll want to spend a lot of time analyzing your idea, thinking about different approaches, and networking with others to get different perspectives.

Research and Plan

A big part of any business startup is developing a business plan. A business plan involves stating your idea in terms of a business description and then detailing demand, competition, marketing, operating procedures, and financial needs for equipment, supplies, and personnel. Begin by asking yourself some key questions: who are you serving (who are your customers), what are you providing, and what are the steps you'll take to reach your goals?

You'll also want to look at the financial realities of getting your business up and running. It takes a lot of capital to start up a business. The personal and business life of an entrepreneur are usually connected. See what you can commit to the business (e.g., personal savings) and learn about other financing options (e.g., loans, grants). Develop a financial plan for your business, with short-term and long-term goals and projections.

Know Your Resources

There are a lot of excellent local and national resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Several of those resources are specifically for veterans, and many are summarized in **RESOURCES FOR VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES AND VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS (PAGE 76)**. Take a look to see what assistance and guidance is available to you.

“Entrepreneurship usually starts with an idea. But, you need to keep an open mind and really think about different business options to get an idea off the ground.”



Continuing Your Education

5 Steps for Education

Career planning and exploration help you develop a list of occupations that you're interested in. Some of the occupations on your list might be similar to the military jobs you held during active duty, while others might be completely different from what you did before. Regardless of how much or how little those occupations tie to your military service, each will have a minimum level of education that is required for you to get a job in the occupation.

As you start to consider your education options:

DECIDE whether you'll go back to school or get more training.

PLAN how you'll get your education.

SELECT the educational institution or training program that's right for you.

APPLY for schools and education programs.

FINANCE your education by learning about the benefits you've earned and budgeting for costs.

This article takes you through five main steps of continuing your education. It's important that you use any resources available to you, stay organized, and keep focused on your career goals and plans.



1. **Decide** whether you'll go back to school or get more training

Your first step in planning for your education is deciding how much education you'll need.

Revisit Your Career Exploration and Planning Efforts

What education is needed for the occupations and careers you're interested in? Use the information you put together when exploring careers to make a decision on whether to continue your education. This takes some time, research, and reflection, but it's important to tie what you need to what you want.

Reflect on What's Important to You

Think about whether school sounds right for you. List the reasons why you would continue going to school and why you wouldn't. Compare the lists and see what stands out.

Keep an Open Mind

Consider all of your education options. There are a lot of education options beyond four-year universities and colleges, like apprenticeships, online classes, community colleges, and training programs. A four-year college might be just what you're looking for. But if it isn't, don't automatically think school isn't right for you. Other options might be a better fit, so consider them.



Learn About the Benefits You've Earned

See what education benefits you've earned and use that information to help you make your decision. School can be expensive and it takes time. Whether you're working and going to school, raising a family, or dealing with a disability, education benefits will give you the extra support you need to balance your commitments and work toward your career goals. Learn more about education benefits in **EDUCATION BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES (PAGE 26)**.

2. **Plan** how you'll get your education

Planning for your education and applying for schools go hand-in-hand. There are many options and what you choose will depend not only on the career you want but also on other factors, such as cost, flexibility, and location.

Learn About the Different Types of Schools and Programs

Consider different schools and programs and what type of education will be right for you. There are many different types of schools and education programs, including: four-year colleges and universities; community/junior colleges; vocational and technical training schools; apprenticeships; and distance learning programs (online programs). The type of school/program you choose will be driven by the education you'll need for your occupation and career. But, you should consider other factors as well, such as:

Academic programs: Does the school/program have the academic program you need for your occupation and career?

Costs and financing: What are tuition costs? Don't forget to estimate supplies, fees, and living expenses across schools.

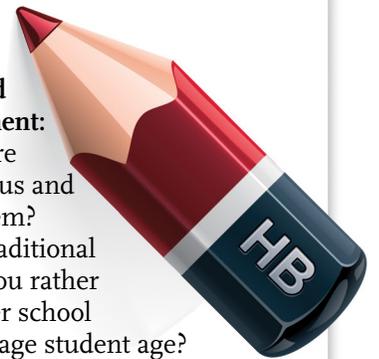
Flexibility: Is there flexibility in class schedules that will allow you to work and go to school if you need to?

Your learning style: What environments do you like to learn in (e.g., classroom, on-the-job)? Which schools/programs provide the learning environment you prefer?

Location and housing: Is the school near or far from where you live now? Is it far from family? Is distance learning (online learning) available? Is there housing available if you need it?

Campus and campus environment: What amenities are available on campus and would you use them? Do you prefer a traditional school or would you rather attend a commuter school with an older average student age?

Retention, graduation, and job placement rates: What are the school's retention, graduation, and job replacement rates and how do they compare to those of other schools?



3. **Select** the educational institution or training program that's right for you

With your list of priorities and schools/programs ready to go, begin narrowing your list to those that have courses and degrees in fields related to your chosen occupation(s) and that fit best with your budget, timeline, and priorities. To find schools/programs, you can use **New Mexico Workforce Connection** (www.jobs.state.nm.us). The **Education Services** tools include listings of training providers and schools, as well as a listing of training and education programs. You can search for schools/programs by location, occupation, and type of school/program. Another resources for finding schools/programs is **The College Navigator** (<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>), a resource from the National Center for Education Statistics.



AFRL Scholars at Career Forum
Wendy Garcia, a student at New Mexico State University, listens as an employee from Boeing shares information about his company at a Career Forum June 30, 2016. Garcia is one of 154 students at Kirtland participating in the Air Force Research Laboratory Scholars Program.
(Photo by Todd Berenger)

4. **Apply** for schools and education programs

When applying for schools/programs, first and foremost, keep track of application deadlines. Your application packet may include many different forms and documents. Read the application instructions of each school/program carefully and submit all the paperwork and forms they ask for. Contact the school to make sure they received all your application materials. Keep copies of your application materials for your records.

Learn What You Need to Do Before Applying

Different schools require different application materials. Find out what you'll need to do and have before you start applying to schools/programs. Here are a few things you might need to prepare for the application process:

Standardized test scores: You might need to take the ACT, SAT, GRE, or other standardized test.

Accomplishments and activities: Create a list of your accomplishments and activities that you can include in any applications or essays. Include any related to your military service.

Scholarship applications: Make a list of scholarships you're going to apply for. Prepare your applications.

Transcripts: You'll need high school and any other coursework transcripts. Request these well in advance of applying.

Letters of recommendation: Reach out to people who can attest to your abilities for letters of recommendation.

Interviews: A few schools require that you interview. Learn about common interview questions and practice answering them.

School visits: Visit any schools you're considering attending. Check to see if they have a veteran's office you can contact.

Financial comparison: Compare the costs, including tuition, fees, books, and living expenses, for each school.

Benefits eligibility: Learn about the education benefits you've earned and incorporate any benefits you receive into your budget.



5. Finance your education by using the benefits you've earned and budgeting for costs

Your education will be one of the biggest investments you make. It's also not a cheap investment. That's why it's so important to know what education benefits you've earned and to create a budget that includes those benefits.

Know About the Benefits You've Earned

EDUCATION BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES (PAGE 26) gives you information on the different benefits available to veterans. Read the article and visit the resource links to find out what's available to you. If you need more assistance, contact:

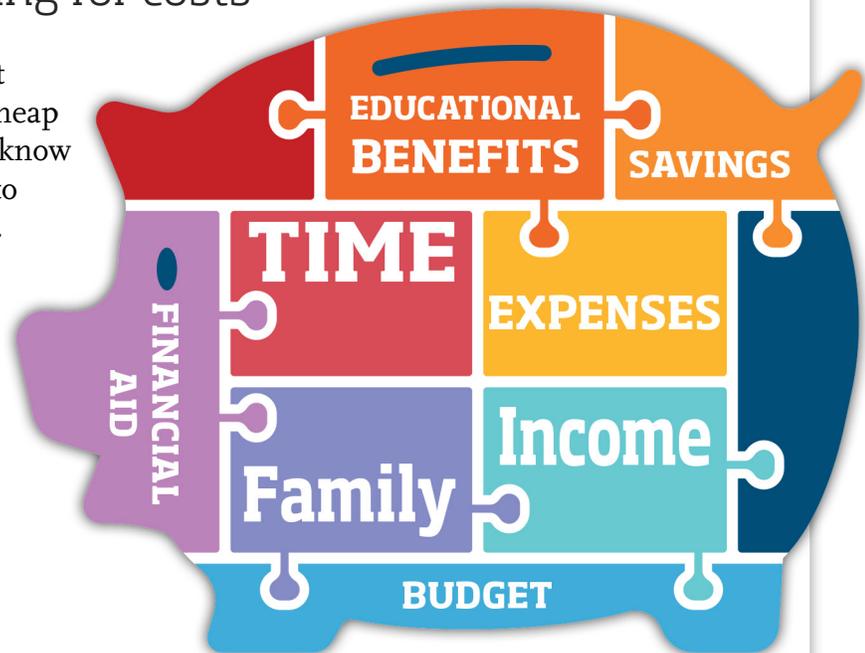
- The VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VA)
- The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS)
- Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists

This is a critical step in your education process and will impact your budget. You've earned your benefits, so use them to get the education you need.

Learn About Other Types of Financial Assistance

Don't get caught in the trap of thinking that your military education benefits eliminate the need for scholarships, grants, or other assistance. While some applications for other types of aid can take time, many have a fairly easy application process.

EDUCATION BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES (PAGE 26) provides information on veteran- and non-veteran-specific education assistance options.



Budget for Your Education

Creating a budget is a critical part of financing your education. There are just a few simple things you'll need to do to get your budget together.

Set Your Education Time Span.

Choose to create a budget for each month, semester, quarter, or calendar year. Monthly budgets are particularly helpful if you think money is going to be tight, which is often the case when you're in school.

Involve Your Family. If you have a spouse and/or children, talk to them about how pursuing your education will impact the family finances. Find out if any family members will be helping you with your education costs and what they expect from you in return.

List Your Income. Estimate and list how much money you will have coming in each month from VA educational benefits; working; family assistance; scholarships, grants, work-study, or loans; and financial aid credit balance refunds (money left over after your financial aid is applied toward tuition and fees).

List Your Expenses. Make a list of everything you spend money on. Then list how much money you spend on each thing. Make sure you include your college costs, like tuition, fees, books and supplies, equipment and room materials, and travel expenses. Break your expenses out into those that will stay the same each month/semester/quarter/year and those that will change.

Save for Emergencies. Set aside savings as a fixed expense so that you can pay for any unexpected expenses.

Balance Your Budget. Subtract your expenses from your income. If you have a positive balance, it means you're not spending more than you're earning and you're staying within your budget. If you have a negative balance, you're spending more than you're earning and you'll need to figure out how to balance your budget (increase your income or lower your expenses).

Education Benefits and Financial Resources

This article talks about the different military education benefits you may have earned and other non-benefit assistance you might be eligible to receive. Review the different benefits and resources and follow the links to learn more and find out about eligibility. You can apply for many VA education benefits online at www.vets.gov/education.

Military Education Benefits

This section provides information on the VA education benefits you may be eligible for. The listed programs provide benefits for many different types of education and training institutions and programs, including:

- Cooperative (Co-Op) Training
- Correspondence Training
- Entrepreneurship Training
- Flight Training
- Advancing Training and Certifications
- Licensing and Certification Programs
- National Testing Program
- Non-College Degree Programs
- On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeships
- Workstudy
- Independent and Distance Learning
- High-Technology Programs

Remedial and refresher courses may be covered under certain circumstances. More information on VA education benefits and the types of education and training each benefit covers can be found on the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill> and the VA's vets.gov website (www.vets.gov). You can also compare several VA education benefits by using the GI Bill Comparison Tool through the vets.gov website (www.vets.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool/).

GI Bills and Post-Vietnam Veterans' Education Assistance Program

Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service (or 30 days for those discharged with a service-connected disability) after September 10, 2001. Eligible veterans receive benefits for tuition, fees, and housing. Here are some quick facts about the Post-9/11 GI Bill:

- **Benefits vary based on length of active-duty service; the greatest benefits coverage is available to veterans who served at least 36 months of active duty or, if the veteran was discharged due to a service-connected disability, at least 30 continuous days.**
- **Veterans are eligible for benefits for 15 years from the last period of active duty (of 90 days or more) and can generally receive up to 36 months of entitlements.**
- **Benefits can be transferred to spouses and dependents for certain cases.**
- **Benefits can cover all in-state tuition and fees at public degree-granting schools but may not cover all tuition and fees at private degree-granting schools. Out-of-state tuition and fees may also not be completely covered.**

The **Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program** (Yellow Ribbon Program) is a provision of the Post-9/11 GI Bill that helps bridge the gap caused by schools charging tuition/fees higher than what the Post-9/11 GI Bill covers. Under the program, colleges and universities must offer a veterans-only scholarship, which the VA will then match to cover the full cost of tuition and fees.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill also provides educational assistance benefits for Reserve and National Guard members called to active duty after September 11, 2001. Because of this, the **Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)**, which provided educational assistance to members of the Reserve components, was ended on November 25, 2015. Some individuals will remain eligible for REAP benefits into 2019, while others will no longer be eligible.

For more information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill and to find out about your eligibility, visit <http://benefits.va.gov/gibill/> and www.vets.gov. For information on REAP and how the ending of the program might impact you, visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/reap.asp>.

Montgomery GI Bill

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) has two main programs—The Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty (MGIB-AD, also known as Chapter 30) and the Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR, also known as Chapter 1606).

MGIB-AD provides up to 36 months of education benefits. Generally, benefits are payable for ten years following your release from active duty. Under Chapter 30, active-duty members enroll and pay \$100 per month for 12 months and are then entitled to receive a monthly education benefit once they've completed a minimum service obligation. Some service members may contribute additional funds

(up to \$600) to receive increased monthly benefits. There are varying eligibility requirements based on period of service and other factors. For more information and to find out about your eligibility, visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/mgib_ad.asp and www.vets.gov.

MGIB-SR is available to members of the Selected Reserve (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Reserves and the Army and Air National Guards). It provides 36 months of education benefits. To be eligible you must be a reservist who is actively drilling and has a six-year obligation in the Selected Reserve, signed after June 20, 1985. There are other eligibility requirements, and potential extensions available in certain situations, that you should be aware of. For more information and to find out about your eligibility, visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/mgib_sr.asp and www.vets.gov.

Survivors and Dependents Assistance

There are two main GI Bill programs offering education assistance to survivors and dependents of veterans—the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship) and the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program. The Fry Scholarship is available for children and spouses of service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. The DEA program offers education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. Eligibility requirements vary. To learn more about these two programs and to compare which might be right for you, visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/survivor_dependent_assistance.asp and www.vets.gov.

“Even if you’re receiving veteran benefits, including GI Bill benefits, you can still qualify for student aid, such as grants and loans.”

Post-Vietnam Veterans' Education Assistance Program

The Post-Vietnam Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP) is an educational assistance program available to service members who entered service between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985 and who elected to make contributions from their military pay to participate in the program. Under VEAP, a service member's contributions to the program are matched on a two-to-one basis by the government. Education benefits are available for up to 36 months. Eligibility requirements vary, so visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/veap.asp> for more information.

Other VA Education Benefits and Programs

National Call to Service Program

The National Call to Service Program (NCS) offers education incentives to individuals serving active duty in the military. If you performed a period of national service, you can choose to collect benefits from NCS instead of from the Post 9/11 GI Bill or MGIB. The NCS offers several incentives, including a cash bonus, loan repayment, and an educational entitlement. For more information on NCS, visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/national_call_to_service.asp and www.vets.gov.



New Mexico Veteran-Specific Education Resources

The State of New Mexico offers several benefits to veterans and their dependents.

New Mexico Scholarships

Vietnam Veterans Scholarship

The Vietnam Veterans Scholarship is available to undergraduate and graduate Vietnam veterans. The scholarship can be used to pay for tuition, fees, and books. The scholarship is renewable if the student maintains satisfactory progress. To be eligible, you must be an undergraduate or graduate student who was honorably discharged, a New Mexico resident, and have been awarded a Vietnam combat medal for services during the Vietnam conflict. Your educational institution will have application instructions. For more information, visit <http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/vietnam-veterans-scholarship.aspx>.

Wartime Veteran Scholarship

The Wartime Veteran Scholarship is available to veterans who served in combat since 1990 and who have exhausted all available Post-9/11 GI Bill or Montgomery GI Bill benefits. For more information, visit <http://nmdvs.org/state-benefits/>.

In-State Tuition for Veterans

Veterans using federal education benefits and their dependents can receive in-state (i.e., resident) tuition rates at all state-operated institutions of higher learning in New Mexico, regardless of where they live. For more information, visit <http://nmdvs.org/state-benefits/>.

World War II and Korean Veterans' High School Diploma

Any veteran who left a New Mexico high school before graduating to serve in World War II or the Korean War will be awarded a valid high school diploma issued from the high school they were attending. For more information, visit <http://nmdvs.org/state-benefits/>.

Tuition Waiver for Children of Deceased Veterans

Children between the ages of 16 and 26 whose veteran parent was killed in action or died as a result of their wounds incurred in battle qualify for a full tuition waiver at any state-funded postsecondary school and a stipend. For more information, visit <http://nmdvs.org/state-benefits/>.



Other Veteran-Specific Education Resources

Here is a selection of other veteran-specific education resources. This list is not exhaustive. Do research on your own and contact the financial aid office at your educational institution or veteran organizations to learn about other resources.

Service-Specific Resources

The military services have individual programs to assist veterans and/or their dependents with education expenses through grants, scholarships, loans, and loan assistance. Organizations that provide these resources include, but are not limited to:

- **Army Emergency Relief**
<http://www.aerhq.org/>
- **Air Force Aid Society**
<http://www.afas.org/education-history>
- **Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation**
<https://www.mcsf.org/>
- **Navy Marine Corps Relief Society**
<http://www.nmcrs.org/pages/education-loans-and-scholarships>
- **Coast Guard Mutual Aid**
<http://www.cgmahq.org/programs/education/educationGeneral.html>

Scholarships

Here is a sample of a few other scholarships just for veterans. Research veteran scholarships on your own, but be careful. Make sure scholarship information and offers are legitimate; you shouldn't have to pay to find scholarships or other financial aid.

The **AMVET National Scholarship** is available to veterans who have exhausted their Post 9/11 GI Bill or MGIB benefits. (<http://www.amvets.org/amvets-in-action/scholarships/>)

The **Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Scholarship** is available to all veterans who have been awarded the Purple Heart, as well as widows and dependents who were awarded the Purple Heart posthumously. (<http://www.purpleheart.org/Scholarships/>)

The **American Legion Scholarship** is available to all veteran members of the legion that are undergraduate students at an accredited college or university. (<http://www.legion.org/scholarships>)

The **Pat Tillman Foundation, Leadership Through Action—Tillman Military Scholars Program** provides financial assistance to veterans and active-duty military. Award amounts vary, and eligibility is determined by merit and financial need. (<http://pattillmanfoundation.org/apply-to-be-a-scholar/>)

The **Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Scholarship Fund Educational Assistance Program** provides interest free loans, grants, and scholarships for students seeking undergraduate degrees. (<http://www.moaa.org/Content/Benefits-and-Discounts/Education-Assistance/Education-Assistance.aspx>)

Troops to Teachers

The Troops to Teachers Program (TTT) is a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) program that provides counseling and assistance to active-duty members and veterans who choose to pursue a degree in teaching or education. Financial assistance may also be available for select participants who are just entering the teaching field. For more information, visit <http://www.dantes.doded.mil/service-members/become-a-teacher/troops-to-teachers.html>.



Non-Veteran-Specific Education Resources

Even if you're receiving veteran benefits, including GI Bill benefits, you still qualify for student aid, such as grants and loans. Here is a selection of some non-veteran-specific education resources. This list is not exhaustive. Do research on your own and contact the financial aid office at your educational institution or veteran organizations to learn about other resources.



Federal Grants

Grants are aid provided to students that doesn't have to be repaid. They are often need-based. Federal grants through the U.S. Department of Education include:

Pell Grants. These are given to students with great financial need. Eligible students can receive up to \$4,050 a semester.

Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG). This grant is only given to students with the greatest financial need. Eligible students can receive up to \$4,000 a semester.

Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants. This grant is given to students who are completing or plan

to complete course work needed to begin a career in teaching and who commit to teaching in a high-need field, at a school that serves low-income families, and for at least four complete academic years. Eligible students can receive up to \$4,000 a year.

For more information on financial aid, go to the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Office website at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa>.



"Make sure scholarship information and offers are legitimate; you should not have to pay to find scholarships or other financial aid."

New Mexico Grants, Loan for Service Programs, Loan Repayment Programs, and Scholarships

Grants

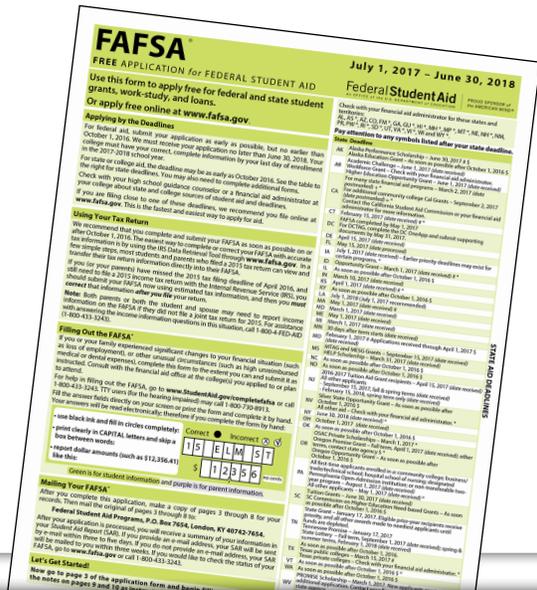
There are two grants through the state—the Student Incentive Grant Program and the College Affordability Grant. Both are available for students with substantial financial need who are attending a New Mexico public college or university or tribal college. The New Mexico Student Incentive Grant can provide \$200 to \$2,500 annually, while the Affordability Grant can provide a maximum of \$1,000. Each grant can be renewed annually. For more information on these grants, visit the New Mexico Department of Higher Education (NMHED) website at http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/fa_quicklist.aspx.

Loan for Service Programs

Loan for service programs encourage students majoring in specific fields to work in that field in rural and/or high-need areas of the state. Through such programs, all or a portion of a student's educational loans may be forgiven for each year he or she works in that field in designated areas. New Mexico's Loan for Service Programs include the Allied Health, Medical, Nursing, Minority Doctoral, Nurse Educator, Teacher, and WICHE Loan for Service Programs. For more information, visit the NMHED website at http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/fa_quicklist.aspx.

Getting to Know the FAFSA

Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step toward getting educational financial aid beyond your military benefits. Your eligibility for many of the resources listed here are determined using the FAFSA. You can fill out your FAFSA online or through the mail. Colleges/other institutions will use it to determine how much aid you can receive. The best resource to help you complete your FAFSA is the Federal Student Aid Office of the U.S. Department of Education (<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>). Even if you don't think you'll need much financial aid, it doesn't hurt to see what you could receive.



Other Scholarships

There are thousands of scholarships offered by schools, employers, individuals, private companies, nonprofits, communities, religious groups, and professional and social organizations. Contact the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend and check information at your public library or online to find information on scholarships. Make sure scholarship information and offers are legitimate; you should not have to pay to find scholarships or other financial aid. For more information on looking for and applying for scholarships, visit the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Financial Aid website at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa>.

Student Loans

When you've exhausted all other financial aid possibilities, you might consider taking out a student loan. Education loans are available to students attending school at least part-time (6 to 8 credit hours a semester). The federal government offers students loans, and you can also get loans through private lenders. Before you consider student loans, visit the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid office website at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans>.

Loan Repayment Programs

Loan repayment programs provide loan repayment for outstanding student loans of certain professionals who commit to a set amount of time of service after graduation in a rural and/or high-need area of the state. New Mexico's Loan Repayment Programs include the Health Professional, John R. Justice, Public Service Law, Teacher, and New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Worker Loan Repayment Programs. For more information, visit the NMHED website at http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/fa_quicklist.aspx.

Scholarships

Several scholarships are available through the State of New Mexico, including the Legislative Lottery Scholarship, New Mexico Scholars, Athletic Scholarship, Bridge Scholarship, Fire Fighters and Peace Officers Survivors Scholarship, and Graduate Scholarship, in addition to the Vietnam Veterans' Scholarship and Wartime Veterans Scholarship. For more information, visit the NMHED website at http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/fa_quicklist.aspx.

Work Study Program

Work study programs provide funding for part-time employment opportunities for student attending public colleges or universities (and select private institutions). The program pays a portion or all of a student's wages in select jobs at his or her education institution. As a veteran, you may be eligible for work study through your VA education benefits. If not, you might be eligible through the State of New Mexico Work Study Program. For more information, visit the NMHED website at <http://www.hed.state.nm.us/students/workstudy.aspx>.



Looking for Work and Landing the Job

8 Steps of the Job Search

Looking for a job can be overwhelming, especially if you are a recently separated veteran. You've gained a lot of valuable experience that is very desirable in the job market. Now, you'll need to translate that experience and the skills you've gained into civilian terms. This can be difficult when you're communicating with an employer who's not familiar with the military. But it's not impossible, and there are many resources that are there to help.

This article focuses on the job search and application process. It's targeted toward helping you use your military experience to successfully look for and apply for jobs. While the steps of the job search are fairly standard, you'll tackle them from a different perspective. Use the information in this article to gain an edge in the job market and be prepared to use your military experience for what it is—an invaluable asset.



Exploring career options is the first step of the job search and is extremely important. The broad purpose of career exploration is to make informed decisions that will help you build a successful career path. A practical purpose of career exploration is to help you focus your job search so that you're looking for jobs that help you meet your employment goals.

CAREER EXPLORATION AND PLANNING (PAGE 10) gives you detailed information on exploring your options. If you haven't explored careers or started planning for your employment future, visit that article. Then move onto the next job search step.

2. Look for the Ideal Job

Once you have a better idea of the career path you'd like to take, it's time to start looking for job openings. Looking for a job takes time, so plan on working on your applications and searching for job openings each day.

Use Veteran-Specific Resources

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS (PAGE 40) lists many of the best and most used resources to help you with your job search. Each resource offers different types of assistance, so learn about each and decide which will be most helpful to you.

Translate Your Military Skills and Experience

It's not only the employer that may struggle to see how your military skills and experience translate into a civilian job. You might struggle too, and that means you may not be able to tell whether or not you're qualified for a job or be able explain to an employer how you're qualified. This sets you at an immediate disadvantage.

One of the best tools to help you put your military experience and skills into civilian terms is the **Military Skills Translator** from the VA's vets.gov website (<https://www.vets.gov/employment/job-seekers/skills-translator>). This translator takes your branch of service and Military Occupation Code (MOC) and reports a list of skills required for that MOC. Keep a copy of this list so you can use it when talking to employers and submitting application materials, like your resume and cover letter.

Look for Job Openings in Different Ways

Looking Online: There are many online websites with job postings, and some even allow you to apply for jobs directly through the site. Check to see if a site identifies job postings that give preference to veterans or includes postings with companies that have committed to hiring veterans. Some of the best online job search sites for veterans include the **Veterans Employment Center's Veterans Job Bank** (www.vets.gov/employment/job-seekers/search-jobs) and **New Mexico Workforce Connection** (www.jobs.state.nm.us).

In-Person Outreach and Networking: Making in-person connections and using your network can be the most effective way to learn about job openings and to get an interview. Tap into your network to learn about job openings and discover companies/organizations that are committed to hiring veterans and/or already employ veterans.

Be Prepared to Network: Job Hunting Business Cards

You never know when you'll make a connection that might lead to a job opportunity. A great idea is to keep **Job Hunting Business Cards** with you at all times. A Job Hunting Business Card should include key points on your education and skills, as well as your basic contact information. It's easy to carry with you and hand to employers or anyone you want to connect with professionally.



3. Prepare Your Application Documents

You will almost always need a resume and cover letter when applying for a job. You may also need transcripts, writing samples, or portfolios of work. Spend time preparing and perfecting these materials. Stay organized—save copies of documents and job applications in physical/ electronic folders. Scan and make hard copies

of any and all documents so you can easily send or give them to employers or upload them to an online job application.

Don't forget to proofread your resume and cover letter several times and have others proofread them. It's helpful to get feedback from people familiar with the military and people who aren't.

Visit **EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS (PAGE 40)** to learn more about resources that provide resume and cover letter assistance specifically for veterans. Keep in mind that you have access to LVERS and DVOP Specialists in your local Workforce Connection office who are there to help you.

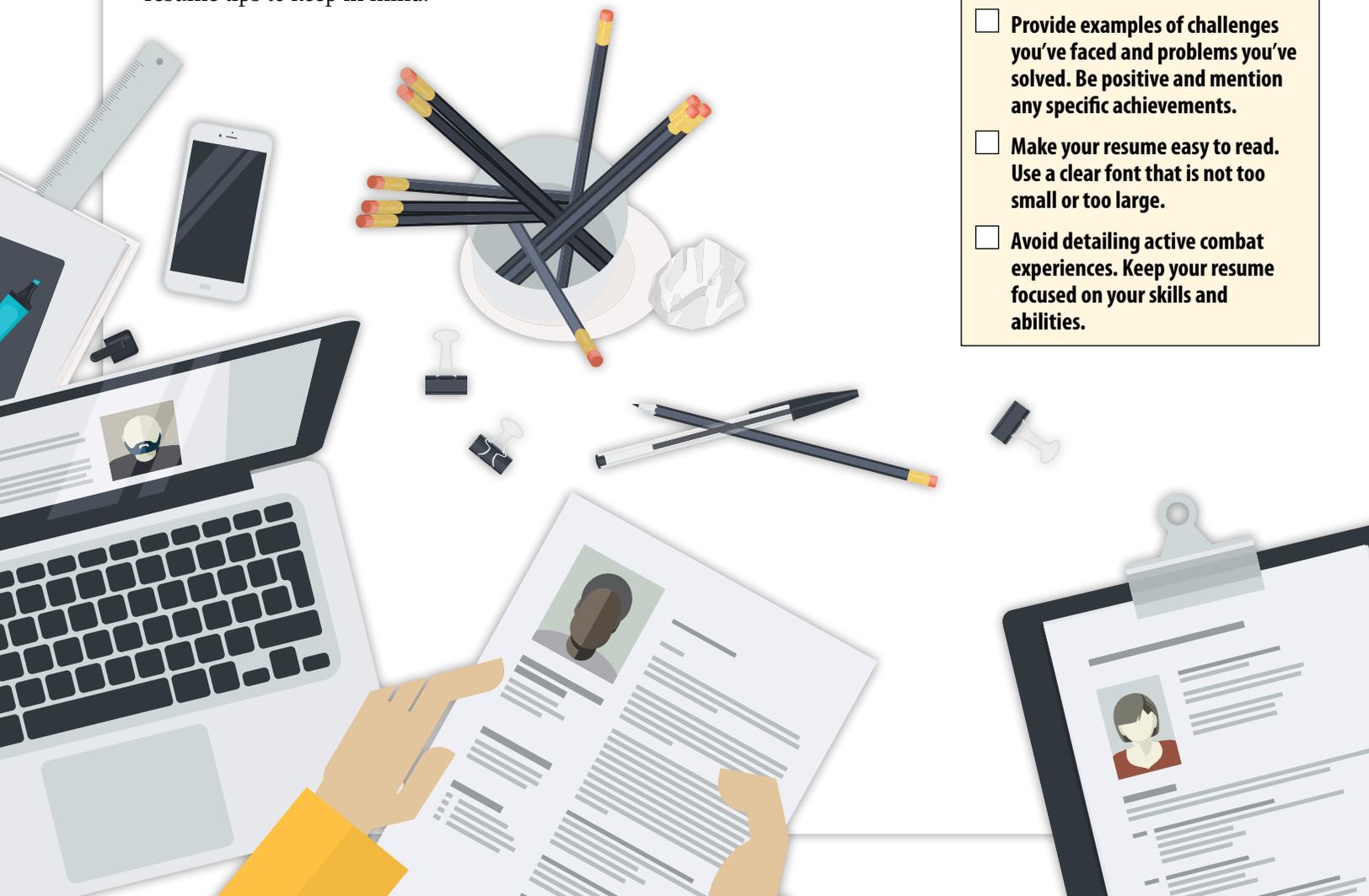
The Resume

The main goal of your resume is to get an interview. You will also use it during your interview to discuss your qualifications and skills with the employer. You should always have one prepared, even if you're not actively looking for work.

It's not always easy to create a good resume. As a veteran, you face the added challenge of highlighting your military skills and experience while avoiding military terminology and definitions. Non-military/veteran employers may not be able to fully appreciate your skills and experience if you use military terminology they aren't familiar with. Draft your resume assuming that the employer has no knowledge of the military. Here are some other general resume tips to keep in mind:

Resume Tips

- Customize your resume for each job. Include your skills and experience that best match the job and use keywords directly from the job posting.**
- Limit your resume to less than two pages and avoid misrepresentation of your abilities.**
- Provide examples of challenges you've faced and problems you've solved. Be positive and mention any specific achievements.**
- Make your resume easy to read. Use a clear font that is not too small or too large.**
- Avoid detailing active combat experiences. Keep your resume focused on your skills and abilities.**



The Cover Letter

You should always include a cover letter with your resume when you apply for a job. A cover letter is your chance to introduce yourself. They vary in style and content more than resumes, but there are certain guidelines you should follow, many which apply to your resume also.

Cover Letter Tips

- Type your letter, address it to a specific individual or department, and close it with your signature.**
- Convey some of your personality, but keep it professional and focused on your qualifications.**
- Don't repeat details provided in your resume. Do reference your resume, share why you're interested in the job, and mention your skills and experiences that match the job requirements the most.**
- Customize your letter to the specific job and employer. Use keywords from the job description.**
- Keep it brief. Your letter should be less than one page.**

Other Documents

Depending on the job you're applying for, other documents might be required. Here are a few examples:

Transcripts: Request and provide official transcripts from your high school and any postsecondary institutions you've attended.

Writing Samples: Make sure your writing samples represent your best work and have been proofread. Provide samples that best match the type of writing you would be doing in the job.

Design Portfolios: Include a variety of design/work examples (usually 20 pages or more), but make sure they are specific to the job you're applying for. Include notes in your portfolio that talk about why and how the work was created.

Exam Scores: Include exam or assessment scores in your resume or separately in physical/electronic copy. Include official scores.

Job Fairs

Use job fairs to develop your professional network and learn about employers and job opportunities. Job fairs are one of the best opportunities to get an employer's attention because you get to present yourself in person. There are also job fairs just for veterans. To learn more about how to make the best of job fairs, check out **MAKING JOB FAIRS WORK FOR YOU (PAGE 46)**.



4. Network With Others

Networking is the most successful method for finding a job. Networking means interacting with other people to exchange information and develop contacts, especially to further one's career. The key to having a successful network is to start now! Anyone can be in your network—friends, neighbors, family, teachers, employers. Build your network to make sure you have resources for job postings, recommendations, references, and advice. Start by building personal relationships with people you meet early on and nurture those relationships (keep in touch over time).

You already have the beginnings of a network. Make a list of people that you know, both inside and outside of the military. Then make a plan to develop your relationship. Don't forget to network in person and online.

Where to Network

- School and professional organizations
- Volunteering opportunities
- Family, personal friendships, and acquaintances
- Job fairs and career centers
- Military or veteran groups
- Social Media

Research Your Network

Research the companies or organizations of people in your network. Know what they do so you can ask them why they do it. Knowing a little about a person will help you talk to them and develop your relationship.

Be Visible

Don't blend into the background. Make sure you talk with others and speak up in groups at events and meetings. You might be nervous talking to people you don't know, but practice makes perfect. Think of questions you can ask someone to get a conversation started.

Networking Through Social Media

Social networking, the right way, can increase your exposure to career opportunities. But keep in mind that employers research applicants online. Many candidates haven't been hired based on information on their social sites. Keep your online image appropriate to the job you want to have. Here are some tips for using social networks:

- Follow companies, professional groups, and career services that are in your career field or a career field you're interested in.
- Connect with people you know in the profession, including old coworkers, experts, and people you want to work with.
- Update your profile regularly with relevant industry and job-related information.
- Engage in group discussions and message boards and post links to news and articles relevant to your career field.
- Keep your online image appropriate. Nothing online is ever completely private, so don't post something (or be tagged in something) that may prevent you from getting a job in the future.



Currently, LinkedIn is the most popular *professional* networking site. Veterans receive a free one-year subscription to LinkedIn. Go to <https://linkedinforgood.linkedin.com/programs/veterans/premiumform> to learn more.

5. Apply for Jobs

You'll probably be applying for jobs while you're networking, attending job fairs, building your social media profile, and preparing application documents. The job search can be a lot to handle, but if you dedicate the time and energy now, it's more likely you'll not just find a job, but you'll find one that's right for you.

Job Application Tips

When applying for jobs, keep these things in mind:

- Carefully read the entire job description and be familiar with the details of the job. Contact the employer for more information if you need to.
- Customize your cover letter and resume to each job.
- Gather all documents you need to submit with your application.
- Find out how the employer wants you to apply (online, in person, or by mail or fax).
- Submit your documents based on the employer's instructions. If you're applying online, upload electronic documents that are in a PDF format unless the employer requests a different format.
- Dress professionally if you're applying in person. Ask to speak with the hiring manager so that you can introduce yourself, even if you're just dropping off an application.
- Mention the job you're applying for in the subject line and the body of the email if you're emailing your application materials.
- Contact the employer and ask how to apply if you're unsure what is wanted. Submitting your application materials the correct and/or preferred way is very important.

Disclosing a Disability

If you have a service- or non-service-connected disability, you may be wondering when it's best to tell an employer about it. Avoid disclosing a disability in a resume or cover letter unless the job is specifically geared toward someone with a disability. If you have an employment gap (typically of more than two years) due to a disability, try to fill that gap with other activities such as volunteer work or education.

When it comes to the interview, you might consider disclosing your disability to an employer prior to the interview only if the disability is visible, such as noticeable impairments to speech, hearing, sight, or mobility, to avoid any surprise or shock. Otherwise, use your judgment about discussing any disabilities in the interview. Once you discuss your disability, you may want

to mention the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) opportunities available to the employer when hiring a veteran with a disability. For more information on WOTC, see **EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS (PAGE 40)**.

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a qualified applicant or employee with a disability. The ADA applies to private employers with 15 or more employees and to state and local government employers. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces the employment provisions of the ADA. In general, an applicant with a disability is responsible for letting the employer know that an accommodation is needed.

Contacting Your References

Nearly every job you apply for will require references. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Don't include references on your resume or cover letter. Instead, give the employer your references when they ask for them.
- Always contact your references before you give their information to an employer.
- Only provide personal references if the employer asks for them specifically.
- Only provide references that know about your qualifications and will speak highly of you.
- References are typically contacted by phone, but you can also give the employer letters of recommendation.

Following Up with Employers

Your work isn't finished after you send your application. Follow up with the employer about a week after you apply. Say who you are and briefly mention your interest in the position and why you think you'd be a good fit for the job. Keep it short, and don't forget to check your spam/junk folder for emails from the employer.

You do not have to request an accommodation in writing, but it is strongly recommended in order to keep records.

One of the best resources for understanding your rights under the ADA and to find information on applying for jobs with a disability is the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). JAN is a service of the U.S. DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and provides expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. You can find detailed information on the ADA, EEOC, requesting accommodations, and much more at <http://www.askjan.org>.

Visit **YOUR EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS (PAGE 47)** to learn more about your employment rights as a disabled veteran.



6. Interview for Jobs

The purpose of the interview is to get a job offer, so make sure you're prepared! With a little preparation and practice, you'll be ready to talk about your military skills and experience as assets that are major selling points.

Preparing for the Interview

You should *always* prepare for an interview. The interview is your chance to show that you're organized, punctual, and professional. You'll be talking about yourself and your qualifications in more detail, and you'll get to ask questions so that you can make sure the job is the right fit for you. Here are some tips for preparing for the interview.

Interview Preparation Tips

- Take a hard copy of your application materials and any other materials that show your qualifications (such as letters of recommendation) for each person who will be interviewing you.
- Prepare answers to common interview questions prior to the interview. Many websites list the most common questions and give tips for what you should say. Your answers should always tie you to the job and highlight your skills.
- Practice describing your military skills and experience in non-military terms and tying your qualifications to the job requirements.
- Talk to people in your network, look at the company website, and search for news articles to learn as much as you can about the employer. Bring up a few things that you learned during the interview.
- Mention your dedication and work ethic, demonstrated through your military service, so that they can see how you'll transfer those qualities to the job.
- Highlight the leadership skills you gained from your time in the military and give examples of when you demonstrated leadership.
- Prepare a list of questions you'd like to ask about the job and employer to demonstrate your interest. Don't ask about salary or pay unless the employer brings it up.
- Make sure you have accurate directions to the interview location, and keep the business's phone number with you in case you need to call them on the way. Show up early (no more than 20 minutes but no less than 5), dressed appropriately.

Interviewing Tips

- Translate your military experience to civilian employment. As difficult as it may be, you need to bridge the culture gap that exists between military and civilian workplaces, particularly when the employer isn't familiar with the military. Research and practice will help when it comes to the actual interview.
- Talk about how your experience makes you a good person for the job. Give specific examples of times when you were successful. Use examples from your active-duty service.
- Ask questions throughout the interview (including any you prepared beforehand). Take a notebook and write down interviewer names and the answers to your questions.
- Display your best external qualities—maintain eye contact, sit up straight, and use the names of the interviewers.
- Make sure to talk about your best internal qualities—mention things like your experience working in teams, leading groups, and adapting to changing environments. Don't forget to highlight other qualities you have as a veteran, like dedication and loyalty.
- Listen carefully to questions and make sure you understand what's being asked before you answer.
- Use your common sense to determine the best times to ask questions and talk about what you know about the employer.

Interviewing

Enter the interview with “active confidence.” What this means is that you're not too confident, you're actively listening to the interviewers, and you're asking questions, not just answering them. You have something to offer the employer, otherwise you wouldn't be applying for the job, so be confident in your abilities.

7. Follow Up with Employers

You should always follow up with an employer within 24 hours of your interview, no matter how the interview went. Send a letter or email. Formally address either the letter or email to the employer and close both with your signature.

- Include any topics that you may have forgotten to discuss.
- Provide any information the employer asked for in the interview.
- Briefly remind the employer of the high points of the interview.
- Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration and invite the employer to contact you with additional questions or to schedule another meeting.

8. Negotiate Your Job Offer

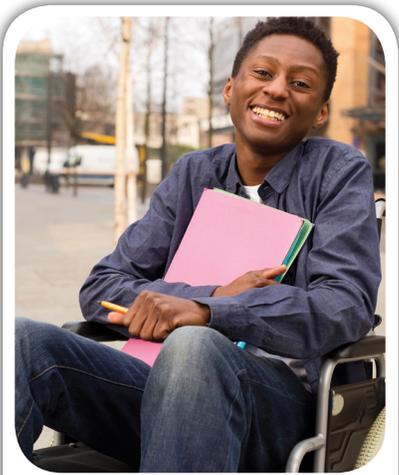
A job offer usually includes a wage/salary, benefits, and other conditions. Remember that both you and the employer should be willing to agree on the terms of your working relationship. Request a day or two to consider any offer you receive. Weigh everything the employer is offering as a combined package and see if there are select parts of the offer you'd like to negotiate. Here are some things to ask yourself:

- Is the wage what you were expecting? Is it similar to what other people are making in the same job and with the same experience?
- What benefits, if any, are included? How much will you have to contribute to benefits like health insurance and a retirement plan? Will you have access to benefits immediately or only after a probationary period?
- Are there other benefits or conditions of employment (e.g., flexible hours telecommuting) you'd want to request or negotiate?

You don't want to seem pushy about the job offer, but you can almost always negotiate if you think you should. Before you negotiate, know your needs and expectations and be prepared to justify what you're asking for. Listen carefully to the employer's response when you negotiate and be prepared to compromise some on what you want. Always keep in mind the overall benefit of accepting the offer.

Employment Resources for Veterans

This article talks about the different employment resources available for career exploration and planning and the job search. Review the resources and follow the links to learn about how each can help you.



Veterans Employment Center

The Veterans Employment Center (VEC) is the VA's internet source for connecting transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to career opportunities. VEC provides you with tools to translate your military skills into plain language and build a profile that can be shared, in real time, with employers who have made a public commitment to hire veterans. Here are a just few resources available through the VEC.

Career Exploration

- Explore careers and identify what's important to you in a job by taking the Interest Profile and exploring related career paths.
- Use the CareerScope assessment tool to measure your interests and aptitude.
- Use the Military Skills Translator to browse careers that are similar to your Military Occupation Specialty (MOS).

Furthering Your Education

- Learn about the education benefits you've earned and the types of education and training they cover.
- Access free online courses on business, software, technology, and creative skills.

Support for Military and Veteran Spouses

- Find out about education and employment resources available to spouses.

The Job Search

- Get help building your resume.
- Take advantage of a free LinkedIn Job Seeker profile to get started with online professional networking.
- Research employers in your area.
- Search online job banks.
- Learn about career fairs available for veterans and their families.
- Access your military transcripts, which can tell you whether military courses or jobs will count toward college credit.

Take a Different Approach

- Get resources on starting or growing your own business.
- Learn about non-traditional programs, like apprenticeships, work study, and on-the-job training.

To access the VEC and other resources through the VA, visit www.vets.gov.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program, sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 Program or Voc-Rehab, assists veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. VR&E is a benefit available through the VA. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

Services are provided through Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) and Employment Coordinators (EC) through the VA. Your VRC will help you develop a personalized rehabilitation plan for reemployment, rapid access to employment, self-employment, employment through long-term services, or independent living. For more information on VR&E, including contact information for your nearest VRCs and ECs, visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp>.

Veterans' Employment and Training Service

One of the best resources is the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). VETS provides numerous resources for veterans, both online and in your community. It is unique in that you can get assistance with your job search and career planning in person through New Mexico Workforce Connection offices around the state. Here are summaries of the major services and resources offered through VETS.

Your LVERs and DVOP Specialists

VETS services are offered at almost all New Mexico Workforce Connection offices in New Mexico. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists are there to assist you with your transition into the civilian workforce. The primary duties of LVERs include conducting outreach to employers, facilitating job search workshops, and providing employment and training services to veterans. DVOP Specialists focus on providing intensive services with priority to special disabled, disabled veterans, and other eligible veterans. VETS services are available individually and through workshops and are particularly helpful because they can be customized and provided to you in person.

To find a local Workforce Connection office near you, visit www.dws.state.nm.us/Office-Locations or view the **NEW MEXICO WORKFORCE CONNECTION OFFICES** listing on the back cover of this guide.

The Gold Card

The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with intensive follow-up employment and training services. Present your Gold Card at your local Workforce Connection office to receive these services. To learn more about the gold card and to print yours, go to <https://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>.

Online Resources Through VETS

Much of the information provided in this guide is available in more depth and with personalized assistance when you work with an LVER or DVOP Specialist. Your LVERs and DVOP Specialists will also use several online resources when helping you. DOL offers VETS Program employment and training services online at www.va.gov, while the State of New Mexico offers services at www.jobs.state.nm.us (New Mexico Workforce Connection). Both resources offer similar services, including:

- **Online job searches**
- **Resume and cover letter preparation assistance**
- **Interviewing and job negotiation tips**
- **Career exploration and skills matching tools**
- **Training and education provider listings**

New Mexico Workforce Connection is unique because it provides customized employment services. Your career and employment activities can be saved to your personal online account so that you can access and update your information at any time. Any online activities you engage in can be saved, and you can even apply for jobs and follow up with employers through the website. Your LVER or DVOP Specialist can assist you in creating your account and learning about and using all of the resources available.

E-Vets Resource Advisor

DOL's e-VETS Resource Advisor assists veterans, service members, and those who support them to quickly and easily navigate information and resources on a variety of topics, including:

- **Benefits and compensation**
- **Education and training**
- **Employment**
- **Family and caregiver support**
- **Health**
- **Homeless assistance**
- **Housing**
- **Transportation and travel**
- **Other services and resources**
- **State-specific information and resources**

The e-VETS Resource Advisor is one of the best resources to find information on a wide variety of veteran-related benefits and issues because information is available in one location. To access e-VETS Resource Advisor, visit <http://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/evets.htm>.

Recovery & Employment Assistance Lifelines (REALifelines) Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor

The Veterans' Employment and Career Transition Advisor, developed by VETS, provides valuable information and access to contact information for one-on-one employment assistance and online resources to assist transitioning service members and veterans in their reintegration into the civilian workforce. To learn more, visit <http://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/VeteransCareerTransition.htm>.

CareerOneStop Veterans ReEmployment

CareerOneStop's Veterans ReEmployment website, sponsored by DOL, is an online resource that provides information to veterans on unemployment benefits, military-to-civilian job searches, benefits and assistance, and job search tips. Some of the resources available through Veterans ReEmployment are also available through the VA's Vets.gov website. Take a look at both to see what they have to offer. To visit Veterans ReEmployment, go to <http://www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans/default.aspx>.

Veterans and Disabled Transition Assistance Programs

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP) provide training and skills development to transitioning service members through Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) curriculum. TAP and DTAP provide mandatory and optional workshops based on each veteran's unique plans for his/her transition. For more information on TAP, review **GET ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR TRANSITION** (PAGE 4). You can also go to <https://www.dodtap.mil>.



Helmets to Hardhats

Helmets to Hardhats is a national, nonprofit program through the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment, and Veterans' Employment and the Wounded Warrior Program that connects National Guard, Reserve, retired, and transitioning active-duty military service members with skilled training and quality career opportunities in the construction industry. Most career opportunities offered by the program are connected to federally-approved apprenticeship training programs by trade organizations. All participating trade organizations conduct three- to five-year earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship training programs. Veterans can utilize their Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits to supplement their income while they learn valuable skills and receive on-the-job training. For more information, go to <http://www.helmetstohardhats.org/>.

Compensated Work Therapy Program

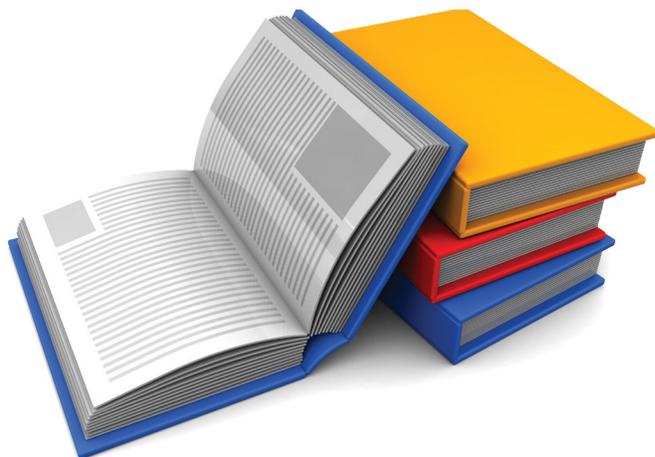
The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program is a VA vocational rehabilitation program that seeks to match and support work-ready veterans in competitive jobs and to consult with business and industry regarding their specific employment needs. In some locations, CWT is also known as Veterans Industries. CWT programs develop an individual rehabilitation plan for each veteran. The program provides:

- Vocational rehabilitation services
- Consultation regarding assistive technology
- Job matching and employment support
- Reasonable accommodation
- Vocational case management
- Guidance in addressing ADA regulations compliance
- Work site and job analysis

New Mexico's CWT program is located at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque. For more information on CWT, visit <http://www.va.gov/health/cwt/index.asp>.

Troops to Teachers

The Troops to Teachers (TTT) Program is a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) program that assists eligible military personnel with the transition to a new career as a public school teacher in targeted schools by providing counseling and assistance. Financial assistance may also be available for select participants who are just entering the teaching field. For more information, visit <http://www.dantes.doded.mil/service-members/become-a-teacher/troops-to-teachers.html>.



Institute for Veterans and Military Families

The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), located on the Syracuse University campus, provides several programs on employment and entrepreneurial education and training. IVMF 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. Most IVMF resources are available to veterans no matter where they are located. Here are a few resources available to you.

VetNet

VetNet is an interactive online resource that assists veterans, transitioning service members, and their families with workforce preparation and training. Resources include resume writing workshops, weekly video chats with industry experts and veterans providing career advice, online seminars about business ownership and entrepreneurship, and online job search options. VetNet is a collaboration between the IVMF and Hire Heroes USA. To visit VetNet, go to www.vetnethq.com.

Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans (EBV) National Program offers training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 veterans with service-connected disabilities and military family members who serve as veteran caregivers. EBV is offered through a three-phase approach that includes online coursework, residency at an EBV university, and support and mentorship through the EBV Technical Assistance Program. For more information on EBV, visit <http://ebv.vets.syr.edu/>.

Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

The Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) program provides the tools women veterans, active-duty, and female family members need to become successful entrepreneurs. V-WISE offers a three-phase program to veteran participants that includes courses on business planning, marketing, accounting/finance, operations/production, human resources, and work-life balance. For more information, go to <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/veteran-and-family-resources/starting-growing-a-business/v-wise/>.

Veterans Career Transition Program

The Veterans Career Transition Program (VCTP) offers online education and training courses and information about national and state-level opportunities and benefits to post-9/11 veterans, their spouses, transitioning active-duty service members, and spouses of active-duty military. For more information on VCTP, go to <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/veteran-and-family-resources/career-training/vctp/>.

Boots to Business

Operation Boots to Business: From Service to Startup is a training program developed with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to introduce and train transitioning service members in business ownership. Boots to Business begins during your transition from the service (TAP) and can continue if you decide to self-select into Phase II and III. For more information, visit <http://vets.syr.edu/education/boots-to-business/>.

Veterans Toolkit

The Veterans Toolkit is a resource offered by the Northeast Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Center and Cornell University that provides three interactive online resources at no cost to veterans with disabilities who are seeking to enter the workforce. The online resources are broken out into several tools that cover talking about your disability to employers, deciding what's right for you, finding job opportunities, understanding your accommodation options, and reaching out for support. For more information, go to <http://www.makingworkhappen.org/Veterans/Vets/index.cfm>.





New Mexico's Operation Soundstage

Operation Soundstage is a pilot program for military veterans and Reserve component members that aims to increase the hiring and training of veterans in the film industry. The program is administered through the Film Crew Advancement Program (FCAP) of the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) for Film and Multimedia and is a multi-state agency partnership that includes the New Mexico Film Office, the New Mexico Department of Veteran's Services (NMDVS), and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS).

Resident veterans and Reserve component members interested in transitioning into the film industry may obtain job opportunities with participating companies. As part of FCAP, Operation Soundstage provides a 50 percent reimbursement of the qualified participants' wages to the participating company for up to 1,040 hours physically worked by the crew member. The funds are available for a limited number of positions, and Operation Soundstage will add an additional position on each production to be available specifically to a New Mexico veteran. For more information, visit the New Mexico Film Office website at <http://www.nmfilm.com/operation-soundstage.aspx>.

New Mexico's Returning Heroes Wildland Firefighter Program

The New Mexico Returning Heroes Wildland Firefighter Program is a cooperative effort by New Mexico State Forestry, NMDWS, and NMDVS. The program hires former members of the military to draw upon the training and experience they accumulated during their service to help protect lives and communities here in New Mexico. Participants in the program are trained to be a part of a ten-person hand crew working on wildland fires, including prescribed burns. For more information on this program, go to <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/FireMgt/ADandReturningHeroesWildlandFirefighterProgramInformation.html>.

Hiring Our Heroes

Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities. Specifically, the program hosts events across the country and on military installations overseas, including: hiring fairs, transition summits, sports expos, military spouse special events, and wounded veterans and caregivers special events. It also provides several digital resources available to veterans at no cost through its Hiring Our Heroes Dashboard (www.myHOH.org). Those resources include:

Resume Engine | Build resumes that translate your military experience into language employers will understand.

Career Spark | Spouses can build skills-based resumes that highlight their work and volunteer experience.

Virtual Job Scout | Utilize a virtual hiring fair platform that connects you to employers.

Employer Roadmap | Learn about best practices for employers hiring veterans.

Fast Track | Explore growing industries, learn about certification and training opportunities, and find out who's hiring.

All*Vets States | Access this portal to learn about state-specific employment resources.

Hiring Our Heroes also offers a 12-week Corporate Fellowship Program at military installations across the country to transitioning service members. The nearest Corporate Fellowship Program is offered at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. For more information on Hiring Our Heroes and the Corporate Fellowship Program, visit <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes>.

HIRING OUR HEROES



U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Hire Heroes USA

Hire Heroes USA is a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of employment training and corporate engagement through personal one-on-one connections with trained Veteran Transition Specialists. Services are available to veterans at no cost and include assistance in creating a resume, translating your military experience into civilian terminology, learning how to network, and learning how to interview. For more information and to register for services, visit <https://www.hireheroesusa.org/>.



Operation Paving Access for Veterans Employment

Operation Paving Access for Veterans Employment, or Operation PAVE, is a program from Paralyzed Veterans of America that seeks to help paralyzed veterans nationwide, as well as their spouses and caregivers, who face significant barriers to employment. Operation PAVE employs an intervention model that incorporates traditional and nontraditional vocational strategies and practices that address challenges to employment. Counselors work as partners for life to ensure veterans and their families not only find employment, but maintain it. It helps veterans prepare for work, guides them through the job search process, links them to educational opportunities, and places veterans in jobs. For more information on Operation PAVE and to contact its regional office, go to http://www.pva.org/site/c.ajlRK9NJLcJ2E/b.7750849/k.36C/Operation_PAVE_Paving_Access_for_Veterans_Employment.htm.



Wounded Warrior Project, Warriors to Work

The Warriors to Work program from the Wounded Warrior Project provides career guidance and support services to Wounded Warrior Project alumni interested in transitioning to the civilian workforce. The program matches a veteran's skills and experience to the needs of hiring managers. Program specialists help veterans set attainable goals, build an effective resume, prepare for an interview, and network with local employers. For more information on Warriors to Work, visit <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/warriors-to-work>.

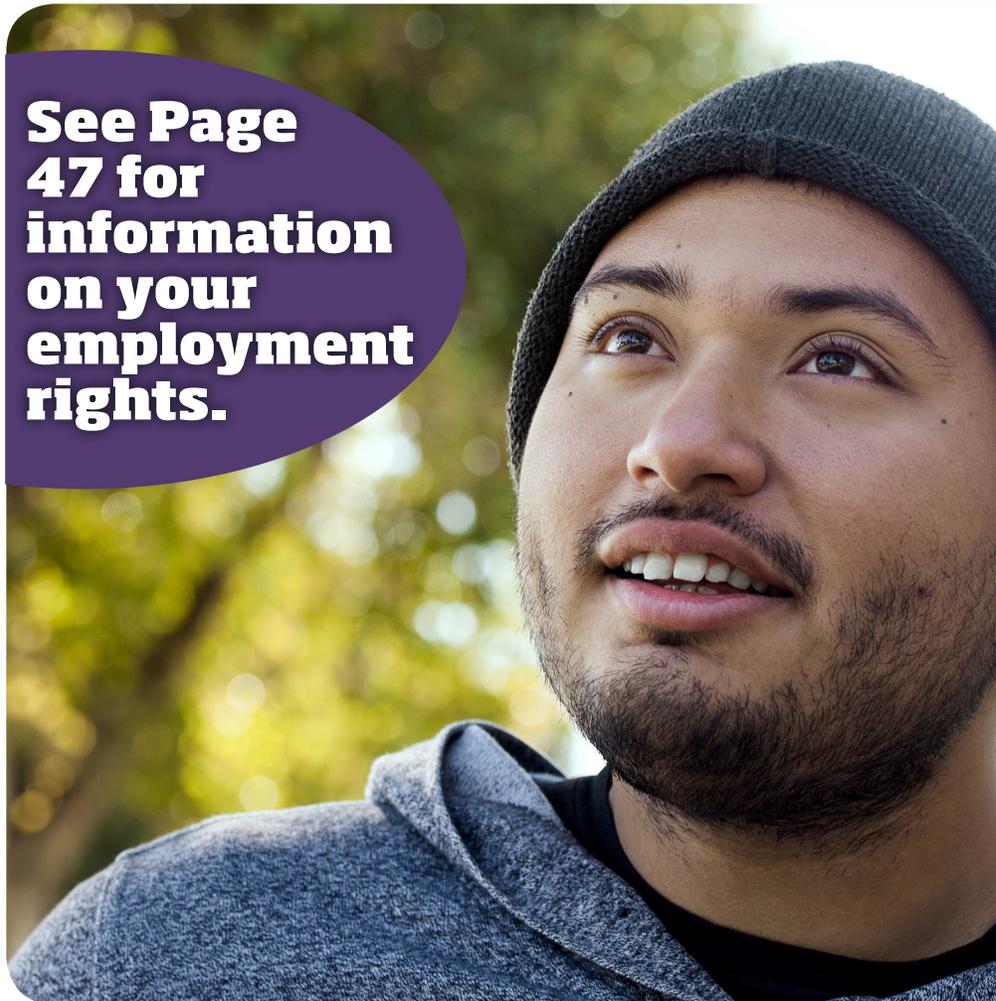


American Corporate Partners

American Corporate Partners (ACP) is a nationwide nonprofit organization that aims to ease the transition from the military to the civilian workforce. ACP offers a mentoring program where veterans work with mentors to find their career path in the civilian workforce. Resources include career assessments, recommended mentoring activities, and a mentoring handbook. For more information on ACP, visit www.acp-usa.org.



See Page 47 for information on your employment rights.



Making Job Fairs Work for You

Job fairs are an excellent way to learn about job opportunities and network with employers in your area. In-person connections are the best way to make a good impression on an employer, and that's exactly what job fairs allow. There are a few ways to make the most of job fairs.

Before the Job Fair

- Find out which employers will be at the job fair and research them in advance. Become familiar with what they do and any current job openings they might have. You will only have a short time to talk to each employer, so go in knowing about the company so you can spend more time talking about what you have to offer.
- Apply for jobs you're interested in before the job fair. Keep notes on the jobs you applied for so you can refer to them when you meet the employer.
- Prepare resumes that are tailored to the employers you plan to meet at the job fair and take hard and electronic copies with you. Use your general resume, but prepare a few different versions that highlight different skills and objectives. These resumes shouldn't be more than one page.

- Be ready to talk about the major points of your resume using a brief summary of yourself. Share basic history on your skills and experience and discuss how they line up with what the employer does.

At the Job Fair

- Dress like you would if you were going to an interview.
- Introduce yourself using your first and last name. Shake hands and maintain eye contact with the employer.
- Attend the job fair as early as possible.
- Get the business card of each employer you talk to and carry a notepad to take notes.

After the Job Fair

- Follow up with each person you met within 24 hours of the job fair. Remind them of who you are and your conversation.
- Send a new resume directly to the employer if you changed and improved it based on your conversation at the job fair. You might also attach an electronic resume if you gave the employer a paper copy.
- Immediately apply for any jobs you learned about.
- Stay in contact with the employer, even if the employer isn't hiring or doesn't have a job for you right now. Build that person into your professional network for the future.



Your Employment Rights

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protect veterans from employment discrimination. USERRA has requirements for reemploying veterans with and without service-connected disabilities and is enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Justice (DOJ). Title I of the ADA, which is enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), prohibits private, state, and local government employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against individuals on the basis of disability.

The information in this article is directly from the DOL and EEOC websites and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions website. These websites have a lot of additional information not covered in this article and can be found at <https://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/>, https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/ada_veterans.cfm, and <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/Veterans/Resources/FAQs>.

USERRA

USERRA prohibits employers from discriminating against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of their military status or military obligations. It also protects the reemployment rights of individuals who leave their civilian jobs (whether voluntarily or involuntarily) to serve in the uniformed services, including the U.S. Reserve forces and state, District of Columbia, and territory (e.g., Guam) National Guards.

USERRA provides that returning service members are to be reemployed in the job that they would have attained had they not been absent for military service, (the “escalator” principle), with the same seniority, status and pay, as well as other rights and benefits determined by seniority. USERRA also requires that reasonable efforts (such as training or retraining) be made to enable returning service members to qualify for reemployment. If the service member cannot qualify for the “escalator” position, he or she must be reemployed, if qualified, in any other position that is the nearest approximation to the escalator position and then to the pre-service position. USERRA also provides that while an individual is performing military service, he or she is deemed to be on a furlough or leave of absence and is entitled to the non-seniority rights accorded other similarly-situated individuals on non-military leaves of absence. Health and pension plan coverage for service members is also addressed by USERRA.



The time limits for returning to work are as follows:

Less than 31 days of service: By the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period after the end of the calendar day of duty, plus time required to return home safely and an eight hour rest period. If this is impossible or unreasonable, then as soon as possible.

31 to 180 days: The employee must apply for reemployment no later than 14 days after completion of military service. If this is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of the employee, then as soon as possible.

181 days or more: The employee must apply for reemployment no later than 90 days after completion of military service.

Service-connected injury or illness: Reporting or application deadlines are extended for up to two years for persons who are hospitalized or convalescing.

An employer cannot require an employee to produce military orders before granting a military leave of absence. The law requires employees to provide their employers with advance notice of military service, with some exceptions. Notice may be either written or oral. It may be provided by the employee or by an appropriate officer of the branch of the military in which the employee will be serving. However, no notice is required if military necessity prevents the giving of notice or the giving of notice is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. “Military necessity” for purposes of the notice exception is defined in regulations of the Secretary of Defense as “a mission, operation, exercise, or requirement that is classified, or a pending or ongoing mission, operation, exercise, or requirement that may be compromised or otherwise adversely affected by public knowledge.

(USERRA continues on Next Page)

Common Questions About USERRA

Q Does the USERRA apply to part-time employees?

Yes, both part-time and probationary employees are covered by USERRA.

Q Does the USERRA apply to very small employers?

Yes. USERRA applies to all public and private employers in the United States, regardless of size. It also applies in overseas workplaces that are owned or controlled by U.S. employers.

Q Is an employer required to pay an employee while he/she is on military duty?

While many employers take the commendable step of providing all or part of an employees' pay while they perform military service, there is no obligation under the USERRA for them to do so.

Q If an employee would have been laid off while he or she was performing military service, does an employer have to reemploy the person when the military service is completed?

No. The employee is "reemployed" in a layoff status with recall rights in accordance with the employer policy for recalls. The employee must be given seniority credit for the period of military leave up to the date he or she would have been laid off. If a complaint were filed, the employer would have a burden to prove the layoff would have occurred if the person had remained employed during the period of military service.

Q Where can I go for assistance concerning my employment and reemployment rights as a veteran or member of the Guard or Reserve?

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) agency that provides free USERRA education, consultation and, if necessary, informal mediation services. ESGR has ombudsmen available to answer USERRA questions and respond to employment disputes related to military service. Call 1-800-336-4590 or visit www.esgr.mil.

ADA

Title I of the ADA prohibits an employer from treating an applicant or employee unfavorably in all aspects of employment, including hiring, promotions, job assignments, training, termination, and any other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment, because the applicant has a disability, a history of having a disability, or because the employer regards the applicant as having a disability. That means, for example, that it is illegal for an employer to refuse to hire a veteran because he/she has Post-Traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD), was previously diagnosed with PTSD, or because the employer assumes he/she has PTSD. The ADA also limits the medical information employers may obtain and prohibits disability-based harassment and retaliation. Finally, the ADA provides that, absent undue hardship (significant difficulty or expense to the employer), applicants and employees with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodation to apply for jobs, to perform their jobs, and to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of

employment (e.g., access to the parts of an employer's facility available to all employees and access to employer-sponsored training and social events).

You are protected if you meet ADA's definition of disability and are qualified for the job you want or hold. The ADA defines an "individual with a disability" as a person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment (i.e., was substantially limited in the

past, such as prior to undergoing rehabilitation); or (3) is regarded, or treated by an employer, as having such an impairment, even if no substantial limitation exists. You are considered qualified if you are able to meet an employer’s requirements for the job, such as education, training, employment experience, skills, or licenses, and are able to perform the job’s essential or fundamental duties with or without reasonable accommodation.

It’s now much easier for individuals with a wide range of impairments to establish that they are individuals with disabilities and entitled to the ADA’s protections. For example, the term “major life activities” includes not only activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, and concentrating,

but also the operation of major bodily functions, such as functions of the brain and the neurological system. An impairment doesn’t need to prevent or severely or significantly restrict your performance of a major life activity to be considered substantially limiting; whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity must be determined without regard to any mitigating measures (e.g., medications or assistive devices, such as prosthetic limbs) that you may use to lessen your impairment’s effects; and impairments that are episodic or in remission (e.g., epilepsy or PTSD) are considered disabilities if they would be substantially limiting when active. Some service-

connected disabilities, such as deafness, blindness, partially or completely missing limbs, mobility impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair, major depressive disorder, and PTSD, will easily be concluded to be disabilities under the ADA.

If you have a military disability rating or a disability rating from the VA, you are probably covered under the ADA. Although the ADA uses different standards than the DOD and the VA in determining disability, many more service-connected disabilities will also be considered disabilities under the ADA than prior to the ADA Amendments Act.

Common Questions About the ADA

Q - During a job interview, may an employer ask about my amputation, why I am in a wheelchair, or how I sustained any other injury I may have?

No. Even if your disability is obvious, an employer cannot ask questions about when, where, or how you were injured. An employer may ask you if an accommodation is needed and, if so, what type if it seems likely you’ll need an accommodation to do the job. An employer may ask you to describe or demonstrate how you would perform the job with or without an accommodation. If you voluntarily reveal that you have an injury or illness and an employer reasonably believes that you will need an accommodation, the employer may ask what accommodation you need to do the job.

Q - Do I have to disclose an injury or illness that is not obvious during an interview or indicate on a job application that I have a disability?

No. The ADA does not require you to disclose that you have any medical condition on a job application or during an interview. However, if you will need a reasonable accommodation to participate in the application process, such as more time to take a test or permission to provide oral instead of written responses, you must request it. Some veterans with service-connected disabilities may choose to disclose that they have medical conditions, such as PTSD or a traumatic brain injury, because of symptoms they experience or because they will need a reasonable accommodation at work. Once an employer makes a job offer, the employer may ask you questions about your medical conditions, and perhaps even require you to take a medical examination, as long as everyone else in the same job is also required to answer the same questions and/or take the same medical examination before starting work.

(ADA continues on Next Page)

Common Questions About the ADA, Continued

Q - Some applications ask me to indicate whether I am a “disabled veteran.” Is this legal?

Yes, if the information is being requested for affirmative action purposes. An employer may ask applicants to voluntarily self-identify as individuals with disabilities or “disabled veterans” when the employer is: (1) undertaking affirmative action because of a federal, state, or local law (including a veterans’ preference law) that requires affirmative action for individuals with disabilities; or (2) voluntarily using the information to benefit individuals with disabilities, including veterans with service-connected disabilities.

If an employer invites you to voluntarily self-identify as a disabled veteran, it must clearly inform you in writing (or orally, if no written questionnaire is used) that: (1) the information is being requested as part of the employer’s affirmative action program; (2) providing the information is voluntary; (3) failure to provide it will not subject you to any adverse treatment; and (4) the information will be kept confidential and only used in a way that complies with the ADA.

Q - How do I ask for a reasonable accommodation?

You simply have to indicate, orally or in writing, that you need an adjustment or change in the application process or at work for a reason related to a medical condition. For example, if you have vision loss and cannot read standard print, you would need to inform the employer that you need the application materials in some other format (e.g., large print or on computer disk) or read to you. You do not have to mention the ADA or use the term “reasonable accommodation.” Someone acting on your behalf, such as a family member, rehabilitation counselor, health professional, or other representative, also can make the request.

Q - I am not sure whether I will need a reasonable accommodation. If I don’t ask for one before I start working, can I still ask for one later?

Yes. You can request an accommodation at any time during the application process or when you start working, even if you did not ask for one when applying for a job or after receiving a job offer. If you are already receiving a reasonable accommodation, you may also request a different or additional accommodation later if your disability and/or the job changes, or if another accommodation becomes available that will help you.

Over 1,500 businesses have made a public commitment to hire veterans.

See who is hiring at <https://www.vets.gov/employment/commitments>



Businesses and Industries Recruiting and Hiring Veterans

There are several national programs that provide veteran hiring incentives to businesses, and there are many employers who are committed to hiring veterans. Government agencies also provide hiring preference to veterans. See **VETERAN HIRING INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES (PAGE 53)** for more information on incentives and resources related to veteran hiring.

National and local programs and incentives are invaluable and undertake the mission of assisting veterans in finding work. There are, however, many businesses that actively recruit vets simply because they recognize the value veterans bring to the job and the workplace. These businesses are creating opportunities for veterans each and every day, so know who they are and what they have to offer.

The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists at your local Workforce Connection office are the best resources for finding businesses that are committed to veteran employment and that recruit veterans. LVERs and DVOP Specialists work with businesses in their local communities to encourage the hiring of veterans and to match individual veterans to known job openings.

Federal, State, and Local Employment— One of Your Best Bets

Federal, state, and local governments and businesses that contract with these public entities offer some of the best employment opportunities for veterans. **As a veteran, you are entitled to preference in hiring for competitive positions within the federal government and in New Mexico government.** Some local jurisdictions may also provide hiring preference, and you should visit city or county websites to identify individual preference programs. Police and fire departments are just two entities at the local level that actively recruit veterans based on comparable training and skills gained from active-duty service. **VETERAN HIRING INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES (PAGE 53)** gives more information on veterans' preference in the federal government hiring process. Veterans' preference doesn't guarantee a job, but it helps eligible veterans compete with other applicants.

“As a veteran, you are entitled to preference in hiring for competitive positions within the federal government and in New Mexico government.”

Private-Sector Businesses

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) keeps an updated list of employers who have made a public commitment to hiring veterans. As of September 2015, 1,551 companies had made a public commitment to hire 877,967 veterans, with over 63 percent of those positions filled by veterans. To see a full listing of all business who've committed to hiring veterans, go to <https://www.vets.gov/employment/commitments>. This resource is continually updated, so bookmark it in your web browser so you can check for updates over time.





Other Resources



Veteran Hiring Initiatives and Resources

The Federal Government and many state governments are committed to ensuring that veterans get back to work. Veterans are well-trained and highly-skilled, but they can often face challenges to employment, particularly when they have a disability. To help veterans find meaningful and satisfying work, many initiatives have been deployed to encourage the hiring of veterans by public-sector entities and private-sector businesses.

It's important that organizations and businesses are aware of the hiring initiatives available to them. But it's equally as important for you, the veteran, to be aware of them so that you know about employers that will be more likely to hire veterans. It can also serve as a selling point when you apply for a job with an employer who is unaware of hiring incentives they could take advantage of.

“ To help veterans find meaningful and satisfying work, many initiatives have been deployed to encourage the hiring of veterans by public-sector entities and private-sector businesses.”

Federal and New Mexico Hiring Preference

As a veteran, you're entitled to hiring preference with the federal government and many state and local governments as well. Below is information on Federal Government and State of New Mexico hiring preference. You should also check for hiring preferences with your city, town, or county.

Federal Hiring Preference

As a veteran, you are entitled to preference over others in hiring for competitive positions within the Federal Government. Preference applies in hiring for virtually all jobs, whether in the competitive or excepted service. (It does not guarantee a job or give veterans preference in internal agency actions, such as promotions, transfers, or reassignments.) There are certain eligibility requirements that you should be aware of, and you must complete an application to determine your eligibility. For specific information on veteran hiring preference, go to www.fedshirevets.gov.



State of New Mexico Hiring Preference

U.S. veterans and current National Guard members are granted hiring preference for jobs with the State of New Mexico. Certain eligibility requirements apply, based on the provisions of Section 10-1-13.2 and Section 20-4-9, NMSA 1978. A veteran must have had an honorable or general discharge from the United States Armed Forces; an honorable discharge with a service-connected disability from the United States Armed Forces; or be currently serving in the National Guard.



When applying for State of New Mexico government jobs, eligible veterans and/or National Guard members should claim preference on their resumes. Applicants claiming preference must submit appropriate documentation with their application. For more information on eligibility requirements and how to apply for hiring preference, visit <http://www.spo.state.nm.us/veteran-s-and-national-guard-preference-eligibility-and-documentation-requirements.aspx>.

“ Knowing the hiring incentives in your area can give you an extra selling point in your interview.”

Hiring Incentives for Businesses

There are several hiring incentives for businesses that are financial-based. Here are two federal incentives and one state incentive. Make sure to check with your city, town, or county for information on any incentives they might provide.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit incentive that Congress provides to private-sector businesses for hiring individuals from 11 target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. One of these groups is veterans. Businesses are compensated by having their federal income tax liability reduced. For more information on the WOTC, visit <https://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/optax/>.

New Mexico Veteran Employment Tax Credit

The New Mexico Veteran Employment Tax Credit provides a tax credit for up to \$1,000 to businesses each time they hire a veteran who has been honorably discharged from the military within the two years prior to the hire. For more information, visit <http://www.dws.state.nm.us/Veterans/Vet-Information/Veteran-Employment-Tax-Credit>.

Special Employer Incentives Program

The Special Employer Incentives (SEI) program provides assistance to employers who hire veterans. The SEI program is available through the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program and connects qualified veterans with a specific role at an organization. Veterans who successfully complete the hiring program are expected to stay on at the organization. With this program, a business can hire a qualified trainee at an apprenticeship wage. Employers are reimbursed for up to half the veteran's salary to cover certain supplies and equipment, additional instruction expenses, and any loss of production. For more information on the SEI program, go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/vow/for-employers.asp>.



Resources for Businesses Employing Veterans

There are many resources available, particularly online, for businesses who have employed or are hiring veterans. Some of those resources target recruiting and retaining veteran workers and developing veteran hiring commitments and initiatives. Others provide important information on understanding the employment rights of veterans, particularly of veterans with disabilities and those with the National Guard and Reserve components. Here are just a few select resources for businesses employing veterans.



Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) clarifies and strengthens the Veterans' Reemployment Rights (VRR) Statute and, through many directives, essentially protects civilian job rights and benefits for veterans and members of Reserve components. While the USERRA is not necessarily a program for businesses hiring vets, it is an invaluable resource for businesses seeking to understand and comply with the rights of veterans and Reserve members they employ. The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) program provides assistance to all persons having claims under USERRA and assists employers in understanding the provisions of the act. For more information on the USERRA, including detailed information on the obligations of employers, visit <https://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/>, read **YOUR EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS (PAGE 47)**, or contact a New Mexico Workforce Connection office and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist.

America's Heroes at Work: Veterans Hiring Toolkit

The Veterans Hiring Toolkit from DOL is designed to assist and educate employers who have made the proactive decision to include transitioning service members, veterans, and wounded warriors in their recruitment and hiring initiatives. The Toolkit was developed to simplify the process and pinpoint tools and outline steps to take when designing a veterans hiring initiative that works for your particular business. The toolkit allows you to select from promising practices and other resources that employers are using to successfully welcome talented and skilled veterans into their companies. For more information, visit <https://www.dol.gov/vets/ahaw/>.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a DOD program that promotes cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and assists in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR provides services to both employers and Reserve service members. It gives service members samples of military leave absence forms, sample letters, service policies, and tips to help avoid employment changes. It also educates service members and their civilian employers regarding their rights and responsibilities under USERRA. For more information on ESGR, visit the federal website at <http://www.esgr.mil/> and the New Mexico website at <http://www.esgr.mil/About-ESGR/Contact/Local-State-Pages/new-mexico>.

Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program

The Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan (MREIDL) Program is a program through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) that provides funds to help an eligible small business meet its ordinary and necessary operating expenses that it could have met, but is unable to, because an essential employee was called-up to active duty in his or her role as a military reservist. The maximum MREIDL loan amount is \$2 million, with the exact amount of the loan determined by the SBA. There are many eligibility requirements and loan terms. For more information, visit <https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants/see-what-sba-offers/sba-loan-programs/disaster-loans/types-disaster-loans/military-reservists-economic-injury-loans>.

Hiring Our Heroes Employer Roadmap

Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is a nationwide initiative to help veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities. While the initiative focuses on resources for veterans and their families and caregivers, it also has a great resource for employers—the Employer Roadmap. This is an online resource that gives employers access to a veteran resume database, the ability to post jobs and recruit workers, and the opportunity to connect directly with job seekers. It also provides information on best practices for hiring veterans and resources to create a military hiring strategy. For information, visit the Employer Roadmap website at www.EmployerRoadmap.org.

Resources for Veteran-Owned Businesses and Veteran Entrepreneurs

This section provides information on some of the best resources for veteran-owned businesses and veteran entrepreneurs, both here in New Mexico and nationwide.

New Mexico's Veterans' Resident Business/Contractor Preference Certification

New Mexico companies and contractors can receive a bidding advantage on state contracts. Veteran-owned businesses can receive a further advantage. For more information on in-state veteran preference of state contract bidding, go to <http://www.tax.newmexico.gov/Businesses/in-state-veteran-preference-certification.aspx>.

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

The VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) works to help veteran businesses gain access to economic opportunities by leveraging improved technology and business processes to address relevant procurement requirements in both the federal and commercial markets. OSDBU does this through four program areas: verification, acquisition support, Direct Access Program (DAP), and strategic outreach communications.

Direct Access Program

DAP offers unique opportunities for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) to build partnerships, maximize networking, and gain access to Procurement Decision Makers (PDM) through Direct Access Events (DAE). DAEs are structured, screened, and periodic events that include business opportunity sessions, networking tables, and education. There are two categories of DAEs: National Veterans Small Business Engagement (NVSBE) and Business Opportunity Showcases (BOS). A lot of resources are provided by the OSDBU. For more information, visit <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/about/index.asp>.

Vets First Contract Program

The VA has special authority to contract with SDVOSBs and VOSBs. These two groups receive the highest priority for open-market procurements. SDVOSBs and VOSBs must be verified by the VAs Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE). The VA also has a Verification Assistance Program (VAP) to help with the verification process. For more information, go to <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/index.asp>.



U.S. Small Business Administration

Office of Veterans Business Development

The Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) offers numerous programs that provide veteran business owners with training and mentorship, access to capital, preparation for opportunities in federal procurement, and cultivation of connections within commercial supply chains and disaster relief assistance. OVBD is also SBA's liaison with the veteran business community. It provides policy analysis and reporting and acts as an ombudsman for veteran entrepreneurs. Go to <https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/ovbd> for more information.

Veteran Business Outreach Centers

The Veteran Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Program is operated by the OVBD. It 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 19 organizations participating in this cooperative agreement and serving as VBOCs. Services provided by the centers include:

- Pre-business plan workshops
- Concept assessments
- Business plan preparations
- Comprehensive feasibility analysis
- Entrepreneurial training and counseling
- Mentorship
- Other business development related services

New Mexico's VBOC is located in Albuquerque. To learn more, visit its website at <http://nmvbc.org/>.

Boots to Business Reboot

Boots to Business Reboot is a two-step entrepreneurship training program offered by SBA and the Institute of Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), Marcus Foundation, and First Data Corporation. It provides assistance to veterans interested in exploring business ownership or other self-employment opportunities by leading them through the key steps for evaluating business concepts and providing foundational knowledge required to develop a business plan. In addition, participants are introduced to SBA resources available to access start-up capital, technical assistance, and contracting opportunities. For more information on Boots to Business Reboot, go to <https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/ovbd/spotlight> or <http://boots2business.org/reboot/>.

Veteran Entrepreneur Portal

The Veteran Entrepreneur Portal (VEP) is designed to help small businesses access Federal services. VA OSDDBU quickly connects veteran entrepreneurs to relevant "best-practices" and information. Collectively, VEP offers direct access to the resources necessary to guide every step of entrepreneurship. VEP is a partnership of SBA and BusinessUSA. For more information, go to <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/entrepreneur/index.asp>.

Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

The Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) program provides the tools women veterans, active-duty, and female family members need to become successful entrepreneurs. V-WISE offers a three-phase program to 200 veteran participants per session that includes courses on business planning, marketing, accounting/finance, operations/production, human resources, and work-life balance. For more information, go to <http://vets.syr.edu/education/v-wise/>.

Institute for Veterans and Military Families

IVMF, located on the Syracuse University campus, provides several programs on employment and entrepreneurial education and training. 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. Most IVMF resources are available to veterans no matter where they are located. IVMF offers the Boots to Business Reboot program in conjunction with the SBA. Here are a few other resources for veteran business owners offered by IVMF.

Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans (EBV) National Program is an initiative designed to leverage the skills, resources, and infrastructure of higher education to offer experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 veterans with service-connected disabilities and military family members who serve in a caregiver role to a veteran with a service-connected disability. EBV is offered through a three-phase approach that includes online coursework, residency at an EBV university, and support and mentorship through the EBV Technical Assistance Program. For more information on EBV, visit <http://ebv.vets.syr.edu/>.





Veteran Fast Launch Initiative

The Veteran Fast Launch Initiative is offered by the SCORE Association, a nonprofit association of volunteer business counselors throughout the U.S. and its territories. The program combines a package of free software and services with SCORE's mentoring program in order to help accelerate the ability of veterans and their families to start and succeed as small business owners. Resources include free business mentoring, online workshops, templates and tools, and financial advice from CPAs. SCORE has offices in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Santa Fe. For more information, go to <https://www.score.org/content/veteran-fast-launch-initiative>.

National Veteran Small Business Coalition

The National Veteran Small Business Coalition (NVSBC) is a nonprofit organization that works to ensure that veteran businesses are given first consideration for federal prime and subcontracting procurement opportunities. Resources available to members of the NVSBC include counseling programs, guidance, and conferences. For more information, visit www.nvsbc.org.

BusinessUSA

BusinessUSA is an online platform administered through USAGov, a division of the U.S. General Services Administration's Technology Transformation Service. It is a one-stop platform for businesses to access services and information related to the government. The platform has a section specifically for veterans. Services and information available include help finding veteran-specific small business loans, starting a business, and doing business with federal agencies. BusinessUSA partners with SBA to offer the VEP. To learn more about the veteran resources available through BusinessUSA, go to <https://business.usa.gov/resource/veterans>.

National Veteran-Owned Business Association

The National Veteran-Owned Business Association (NaVOBA) is a nonprofit membership organization that participates in veteran advocacy in the public and private sectors. It also offers resources such as industry glossaries, contracting checklists, and franchise purchasing checklists. For information, visit <http://www.navoba.com/>.

Patriot Boot Camp

Patriot Boot Camp (PBC) is a nonprofit that works to help active-duty military members, veterans, and their spouses with the education, resources, and community needed to be successful technology entrepreneurs. PBC offers intensive three-day events designed to engage, inspire, and mentor veterans and their spouses and help them start, innovate, and scale the next generation of technology-focused businesses. PBC provides participants with free education and training in entrepreneurial and business skills, as well as mentorship from successful leaders from the entrepreneurial, military, and business communities, hosting events across the country. For information visit www.patriotbootcamp.org.

Homeless Veterans Programs and Services

This section provides information on programs and services for the nation's most vulnerable veterans, those that are facing homelessness. One of the main providers of homeless programs and services is the VA, and this article summarizes many of the VA's programs. It also gives brief information on some of the best non-VA programs available in New Mexico and nationwide.

VA Programs for Homeless Veterans

The VA provides a variety of assistance to the nation's homeless veterans. General information on all of these programs can be found on the VA's website at <http://www.va.gov/homeless/resources.asp>. Information on these programs and how their services are provided in New Mexico can be found on the New Mexico VA Health Care System's (NMVAHCS) website at <http://www.albuquerque.va.gov/services/homeless/>.

Many of these programs operate out of VA Medical Centers (VAMC). New Mexico's VAMC is the Raymond G. Murphy VAMC in Albuquerque, and there are 13 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) in Alamogordo, Artesia, Española, Farmington, Gallup, Las Vegas, Raton, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Silver City, Taos, and Truth or Consequences.



Ending Veteran Homelessness, One Home at a Time.

General Assistance

Physical Disability Board of Review

If you are a veteran who medically separated from the military after 9/11 but before 2010, you can have your disability ratings reviewed by the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR). Through the PDBR process, eligible veterans, including homeless veterans, are provided with additional financial benefits that can assist them with securing stable housing and supporting their families. For more information visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/resources.asp>.

Stand Downs

Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events providing supplies and services to homeless veterans, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, and VA Social Security benefits counseling. Veterans can also receive referrals to other assistance such as health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, and mental health counseling. They are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAMCs, other government agencies, and community-based homeless service providers. For more information and to see a schedule of upcoming Stand Downs, go to <http://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp>.

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and their family members, friends, and supporters can make a call or chat online with trained counselors who are ready to talk confidentially 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To learn more about the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, go to <http://www1.va.gov/HOMELESS/NationalCallCenter.asp>. To make a call to the call center, dial 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838



Housing

Supportive Housing

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) is a collaborative program between HUD and the VA that combines HUD housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help veterans who are homeless and their families find and sustain permanent housing. For more information on HUD-VASH, go to <http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp>.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is a VA program that provides case management and supportive services to prevent the imminent loss of a veteran's home or identify a new, more suitable housing situation for the individual and his or her family. SSVF also works to rapidly re-house veterans and their families who are homeless and might remain homeless without this assistance. This program is available to veterans with very low incomes. For more information on SSVF, go to <http://www.va.gov/homeless/SSVF/>.

Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program

The Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GDP) program provides state, local, and tribal governments and nonprofits with capital grants and per diem payment to develop and operate transitional housing and/or service centers for veterans who are homeless. <http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp>

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program

The Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) program encompasses residential care for sheltered and unsheltered veterans with multiple challenges, illnesses, or rehabilitative care needs. Either on VAMC grounds or in the community, participating veterans receive interdisciplinary clinical care that includes medical, psychiatric, vocational, educational, or social services. For more information, visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/dchv.asp>.

Employment

Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services Program

Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services (HVCES) is a program that provides funding to each VAMC to hire new vocational development specialists who are serving as Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) to boost employment outcomes for veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. For more information on HVCES, go to <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/HVCES.asp>.

Compensated Work Therapy Program

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program is a VA vocational rehabilitation program that endeavors to match and support work-ready veterans in competitive jobs and to consult with business and industry regarding their specific employment needs. CWT assists homeless veterans in returning to competitive employment. For more information, visit <http://www.va.gov/health/cwt/>.

Health Care

Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program

The Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program offers outreach, case management, and residential treatment services to help veterans transition from living on the street or in institutions to stable housing situations. The program is operated out of VAMCs and connects veterans with VA bridge housing, health care, and case management services that promote safe, stable living arrangements. For more information, go to <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/hchv.asp>. To visit the New Mexico VA Health Care System's HCHV website, go to <http://www.albuquerque.va.gov/services/homeless/>.

Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams Program

The Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACTs) program is a system of clinics located on the campuses of VAMCs, community-based outpatient clinics, and Community Resource and Referral Centers that provide a coordinated "medical home" tailored to the needs of homeless veterans. They integrate clinical care, social services, enhanced access, and community coordination. H-PACT clinical teams provide veterans with comprehensive, individualized care, including services that lead to permanent housing. For more information, visit http://www.va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp.

Homeless Veterans Dental Program

The Homeless Veterans Dental Program provides veterans who are homeless with dental treatment through programs such as DCHV, GDP, CWT, HCHV, and Community Residential Care. For more information, go to <http://www.va.gov/homeless/dental.asp>.

" These programs offer assistance addressing the special needs of homeless veterans and those facing homelessness. "

Justice and Reentry

Veterans Justice Outreach and Health Care for Reentry Veterans Programs

The Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) and Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV) programs aim to prevent homelessness by helping justice-involved veterans who have mental health or substance use issues access needed VA clinical services. HCRV specialists work with veterans to ease their transition from prison back into the community. VJO specialists provide direct outreach, assessment, and case management for veterans in local courts and jails and help them navigate the justice system. Every VAMC has at least one VJO specialist. HCRV specialists meet with incarcerated veterans before they're released and assist them in planning for reintegration into the community by accessing VA and community services as well as housing and employment opportunities. For more information on the VJO and HCRV programs, go to <http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp> and <http://www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp>.

Non-VA Programs and Services

New Mexico Veterans Integration Center

The New Mexico Veterans Integration Center (VIC) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to respond to the needs of veterans, with focus on those who are homeless or experiencing a housing crisis, through the provision of quality employment training, housing, and supportive services based on a Continuum of Care. The VIC administers the VA's SSVF program and provides information to veterans on several other VA programs geared toward helping homeless veterans. It also operates a food pantry and thrift shop. New Mexico's VIC operates out of two offices in Albuquerque and one office in Alamogordo. For more information, visit www.nmvic.org.

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) is a nonprofit that serves as a resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers and local, state, and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid, and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless veterans each year. Under a technical assistance grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) program, NCHV provides guidance and information about program development, administration, governance, and funding to all of the nation's homeless veteran service providers. This is achieved through conferences, personal consultations, publications, and NCHV's website. For more information on NCHV, visit <http://www.nchv.org/>.



Acronym Glossary

ACP	American Corporate Partners	IVMF	Institute for Veterans and Military Families
ADA	Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990	JAN	ADA Job Accommodation Network
AFB	Air Force Base	LVER	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
BOS	Business Opportunity Showcases	MCCS	Marine Corps Community Services
CBOC	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	MGIB	Montgomery GI Bill
CEC	VAMC Community Employment Coordinators	MGIB-AD	Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty/Chapter 30
Co-Op	Cooperative	MGIB-SR	Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve/Chapter 1606
CVE	VA Center for Verification and Evaluation	MOAA	Military Officers Association of America
CWT	Compensated Work Therapy Program	MOC	Military Occupation Code
DAE	Direct Access Event	MOPH	Military Order of the Purple Heart
DAP	OSDBU Direct Access Program	MOS	Military Occupation Specialty
DCHV	Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans	MREIDL	Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program
DD 214	Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty	NaVOBA	National Veteran-Owned Business Association
DEA	Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program	NCCC	AmeriCorps National Civilian Conservation Corps
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense	NCHV	National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice	NCS	National Call to Service Program
DTAP	Disabled Transition Assistance Program	NMDVS	New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services
DVOP	Specialist Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program	NMHED	New Mexico Higher Education Department
EBV	Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans	NMVAHCS	New Mexico VA Health Care System
EC	VR&E Employment Coordinator	NVSBC	National Veteran Small Business Coalition
EEOC	U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	NVSBE	National Veterans Small Business Engagement
ESGR	Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve	ODEP	DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid	OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
FSEOG	Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant	OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
GDP	Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem	OND	Operation New Dawn
HCHV	Health Care for Homeless Veterans	Operation PAVE	Operation Paving Access for Veterans Employment
HCRV	Health Care for Reentry Veterans	OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
H-PACTs	Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams	OSDBU	VA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	OVBD	Office of Veterans Business Development
HUD-VASH	HUD, VA Supportive Housing	PBC	Patriot Boot Camp
HVCES	Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services		

PDBR	Physical Disability Board of Review	VCTP	Veterans Career Transition Program
PDM	Procurement Decision Makers	VEAP	Post-Vietnam Veterans' Education Assistance Program
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	VEC	Veterans Employment Center
REALifelines	Recovery & Employment Assistance Lifelines	VEP	Veteran Entrepreneur Portal
REAP	Reserve Educational Assistance Program	VETS	DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Service
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	VIC	New Mexico Veterans Integration Center
SDVOSB	Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	VISTA	AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America
SEI	Special Employer Incentives Program	VJO	Veterans Justice Outreach
SSVF	Supportive Services for Veteran Families	VOSB	Veteran-Owned Small Business
TAP	Transition Assistance Program	VR&E	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program
TEACH	Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants	VRC	VR&E Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
TTT	Troops to Teachers	VRR	Veterans Reemployment Rights Statute
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act	VSO	NMDVS Accredited Veterans Service Officers
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	V-WISE	Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship
VAMC	VA Medical Center	WOTC	Work Opportunity Tax Credit
VAP	Verification Assistance Program	WSMR	White Sands Missile Range
VBA	VA Veterans Benefits Administration		
VBOC	Veterans Business Outreach Center		



Take advantage of the tools and resources in this guide.

For more information on employment opportunities in New Mexico visit www.dws.state.nm.us

Exploring Your Career Opportunities Just Got Easier!

Connect with us    /NMDWS

CAREER SOLUTIONS

www.NMCareerSolutions.com

CAREER SOLUTIONS is a powerful online career exploration and all-in-one planning website for New Mexico's youth, high school and higher education students, and job seekers. The website provides access to a comprehensive set of interactive tools that assist you in exploring careers, planning your future, and getting the help you need to reach for and achieve your career goals.

INTERNSHIPS | STUDENTS WORK

WWW.DWS.STATE.NM.US/INTERNSHIPS

Internships allow for employers to connect with high quality talent in an ever more competitive labor market. They also provide great opportunities for students to apply their classroom learning to invaluable real-world career experiences, and for experienced professionals to explore new career paths or reenter the workforce. The **Internships | Students Work** website was created to be a central place online that links students and job seekers to employers offering internship experiences.



VETERANS

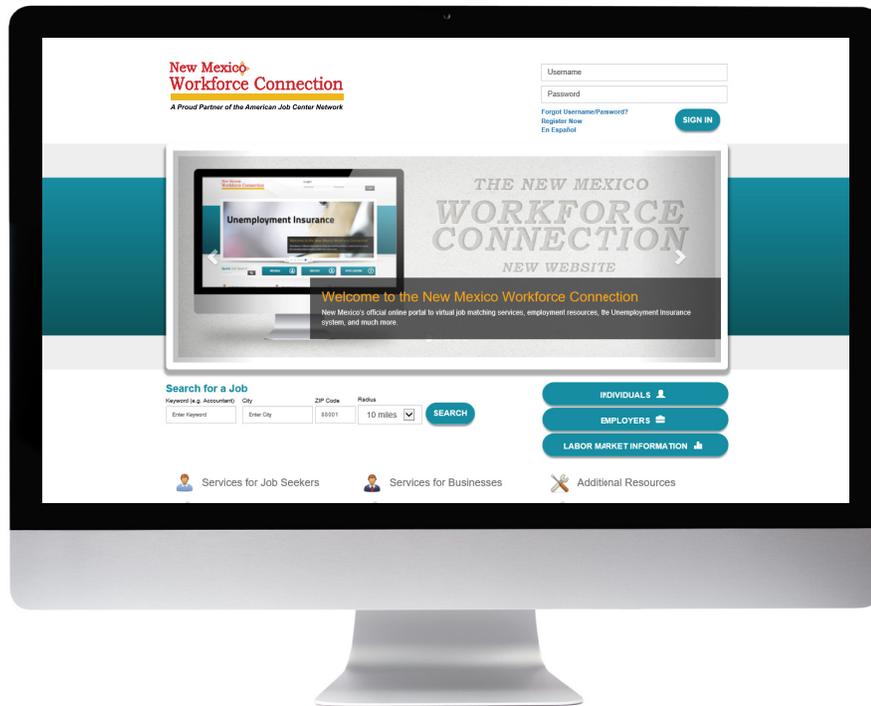
Did you know that eligible Veterans and spouses are given first consideration (priority of service) for employment, training, and placement services?

Speak with a Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) or a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) at a New Mexico Workforce Connection Center near you. A list of locations can be found on the back of this publication.

WWW.DWS.STATE.NM.US

NEW MEXICO WORKFORCE CONNECTION WEBSITE

YOUR #1 CAREER AND JOB SEARCH RESOURCE



Take control of your career and job search today by visiting the NM Workforce Connection website!

The NM Workforce Connection website—www.jobs.state.nm.us—provides a tremendous number of services and information to persons looking for work. This is the first site you should visit; it can serve as your launch pad for career exploration, job readiness, and the job search. The website is your one-stop online resource for information on identifying your career path and looking for, applying for, and getting a job. The resources and services on the site are provided at no cost. You can access this site on your own or visit your local NM Workforce Connection office for assistance.

Start by creating an account. The benefits of creating an account on the site include access to all of the information and assistance available and the ability to store your resume and other important documents, as well as historical information on your job search, applications, and contacts with specific employers. The value of using this website cannot be overstated. Visit www.jobs.state.nm.us today to get started!

Assessments

- Interest Analyzer
- Work Values Analyzer

Tools

- Resume Builder
- Cover Letter Builder
- Virtual Recruiter

Exploration

- Skills Matching
- Interest & Work Values Matching
- Career Informer
- Career Explorer

Education

- Training Providers & Schools
- Training & Education Programs
- Education Program Completers
- Online Learning Resources
- Veteran Services
- Youth Services
- Senior Services
- Financial Services
- Overall Budget Planning
- Training Budget Planning
- Transition Budget Planning
- Financial Aid for Training

New Mexico Workforce Connection Offices

Alamogordo

901 Alaska Ave.
Alamogordo, NM 88310
Phone: 575-437-9210
Fax: 575-437-6312

Albuquerque

501 Mountain Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: 505-843-1900
Fax: 505-843-1990

Artesia

704 W. Main St.
Artesia, NM 88210
Phone: 575-748-1303
Fax: 575-746-3808

Bernalillo

301 Rail Runner Ave.
Bernalillo, NM 87004
Phone: 505-771-2160
Fax: 505-771-2541

Carlsbad

323 S. Halagueno
Carlsbad, NM 88220
Phone: 575-887-1174
Fax: 575-885-4419

Clovis

111 N. Main St.
Clovis, NM 88101-4610
Phone: 575-762-4571
Fax: 575-769-0086

Deming

322 E. Oak St.
Deming, NM 88030
Phone: 575-546-0192
Fax: 575-544-3605

Española

319 Paseo de Oñate St.
Española, NM 87532
Phone: 505-753-2285
Fax: 505-753-1180

Farmington

600 W. Arrington St.
Farmington, NM 87401
Phone: 505-327-6126
Fax: 505-326-6006

Gallup

2918 East Highway 66
Gallup, NM 87301
Phone: 505-863-8181
Fax: 505-863-8995

Hobbs

204 W. Park St.
Hobbs, NM 88240
Phone: 575-393-5188
Fax: 575-397-6380

Las Cruces

226 S. Alameda Blvd.
Las Cruces, NM 88005
Phone: 575-524-6250
Fax: 575-524-6266

Las Vegas

833 Grand Ave.
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Phone: 505-425-6451
Fax: 505-425-5275

Los Lunas

428 S. Los Lentos Rd. SE
Los Lunas, NM 87031
Phone: 505-212-9115
Fax: 505-865-2278

Moriarty

777 Old US Route 66
Moriarty, NM 87035
Phone: 505-832-6774
Fax: 505-832-0220

Roswell

2110 S. Main St.
Roswell, NM 88203
Phone: 575-624-6040
Fax: 575-627-5822

Ruidoso

709 Mechem Dr.
Ruidoso, NM 88345
Phone: 575-258-1730
Fax: 575-258-4781

Santa Fe

301 W. DeVargas St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-7434
Fax: 505-827-7346

Silver City

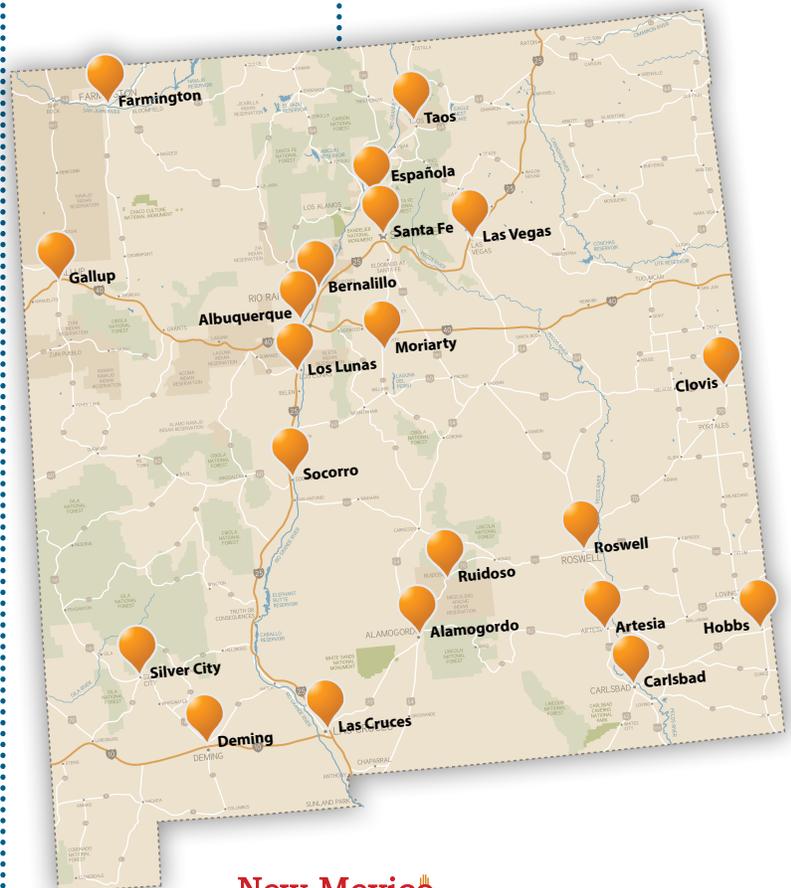
410 W. Broadway St.
Silver City, NM 88061
Phone: 575-538-3737
Fax: 575-538-5072

Socorro

109 Faulkner Rd.
Socorro, NM 87801
Phone: 575-835-0067
Fax: 575-835-9557

Taos

1036 Salazar Rd.
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-758-4219
Fax: 575-758-3941



New Mexico
Workforce Connection

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