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January 17, 2019

The Honorable James M. Inhofe  
Chairman  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

### **Military and Veteran Support: Detailed Inventory of Federal Programs to Help Servicemembers Achieve Civilian Employment**

The federal government's commitment to those serving in the military includes assisting them in pursuing education and employment skills to help them succeed in the civilian workforce. In turn, this helps attract, develop, and sustain the nation's all-volunteer military force. This investment in servicemembers continues after they leave military service and includes members of their families whose lives are also affected by their loved-one's transition to the civilian workforce. Multiple federal agencies administer the programs, both independently and together, to provide education and employment assistance, including help with self-employment, to servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

The federal government assists servicemembers, veterans, and their families through federal programs and tax expenditures. Federal funding and benefits provided to individuals, such as veterans and their families, can be administered in a number of different ways (e.g., programs administered directly by federal agencies or grants). A tax expenditure can include tax deductions, credits, exclusions and other provisions that reduce a taxpayers' tax liabilities.

Several agencies play key roles in administering programs that help servicemembers transition to civilian employment, particularly the Departments of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Labor (DOL). As GAO has previously reported, these agencies are engaged in many efforts designed to facilitate the transition to civilian life, including into the civilian workforce.<sup>1</sup> Further, these agencies also participate in interagency and advisory groups focused on veterans' employment. For example, the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs co-chair the Council

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<sup>1</sup>See GAO, *Military and Veteran Support: DOD and VA Programs That Address the Effects of Combat and Transition to Civilian Life*, GAO-15-24 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 7, 2014); *Transitioning Veterans: DOD Needs to Improve Performance Reporting and Monitoring for the Transition Assistance Program*, GAO-18-23 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 8, 2017); and *Transitioning Veterans: Coast Guard Needs to Improve Data Quality and Monitoring of Its Transition Assistance Program*, GAO-18-135 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 19, 2018).

on Veteran's Employment, which includes representatives from 24 federal agencies and works with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop strategic plans for government-wide recruitment of veterans for job openings and employment opportunities for veterans.<sup>2</sup>

Until now, no inventory of these programs and benefits has been gathered to provide a complete picture of the federal government's activity in this area. As a result, it is difficult to assess the extent of the federal investment in supporting the civilian employment of transitioning servicemembers, veterans, and their families. Additionally, as we have reported previously, the lack of such an inventory of the government's activity in particular areas of interest limits the ability of decision-makers to determine where action is needed to make government more effective and efficient.<sup>3</sup>

The conference report accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 included a provision for GAO "to assess the panoply of benefits and programs available government-wide to separating servicemembers intended to provide the skills and education necessary for such members to achieve meaningful and fulfilling employment in their civilian lives."<sup>4</sup> This report provides a comprehensive inventory of the federal programs GAO identified as providing such assistance to servicemembers, veterans, and their families—including information from the administering agencies on who is eligible to receive services, the programs' objectives, and the available services.

To address our objective, we developed a definition of a program and established criteria for including and excluding programs; identified potential programs by analyzing previous GAO reports and systematically searching publicly available listings of relevant federal programs; surveyed the 11 federal agencies we identified that administer programs within our scope and achieved a 100 percent response rate; analyzed survey results; and interviewed agency officials.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this report, we defined a program as a federally funded, organized set of activities directed toward specific purposes or goals and administered by federal agencies in fiscal year 2017. Our criteria for programs to include in this report were twofold. First, we included programs whose primary purpose is to offer education and employment services that servicemembers, veterans, and their families may use to achieve civilian employment.<sup>6</sup> Second, we included only those programs that serve only these beneficiaries. Thus, some large federal programs that servicemembers, veterans, and their families can use, but which also serve a broader group of beneficiaries—such as those under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act—or programs that only give veterans preference, fell outside our scope. The inventory presented here does not include programs administered by individual branches of the military with the exception of the Coast Guard. All program information contained in this report was

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<sup>2</sup>For more information on the Council on Veteran's Employment please visit <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/veterans-services/council-on-veterans-employment/>. The following 24 federal agencies were named members of the council: the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the Agency for International Development; the General Services Administration; the National Science Foundation; the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; the Office of Personnel Management; the Small Business Administration; and the Social Security Administration.

<sup>3</sup>GAO, *Federal Programs: Information Architecture Offers a Potential Approach for Development of an Inventory*, GAO-17-739 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 28, 2017).

<sup>4</sup>See H.R. Rep. No. 115-404, at 880-881 (2017).

<sup>5</sup>In addition to the 11 federal agencies we identified as administering programs within our scope, we identified one tax expenditure administered by the Department of the Treasury, bringing the total number of agencies administering relevant programs or tax expenditures to 12.

<sup>6</sup>See enclosure I for more detailed information on criteria for including programs in GAO's review.

provided directly by agency officials. We did not independently verify this information. See enclosure I for more information on our scope and methodology.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2018 to January 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

### **Results in Brief**

In summary, we identified 45 federal programs and one tax expenditure with the primary purpose of providing education, employment, or self-employment services to servicemembers, veterans, or their families to help them achieve civilian employment (see fig. 1). Eleven federal agencies administer these programs, usually independently of one another. A few programs are administered primarily by a single agency with assistance from another federal agency. For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program, but the Department of Labor (DOL) plays an integral role in delivering services and the two agencies coordinate training and outreach efforts, according to agency officials. Four of the 45 programs we identified are jointly administered by multiple agencies, including the DOD and Coast Guard Transition Assistance Programs and the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Selected Reserve program. This product contains no recommendations.

**Figure 1: Federal Programs and Tax Expenditures Whose Primary Purpose is to Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families**

<b>Programs that provide funding and benefits</b>	
<b>Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b>	<b>Department of State</b>
1. Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program	23. Veterans Innovation Partnership
<b>Department of Defense (DOD)</b>	<b>Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)</b>
2. DOD Discretionary Certification & Licensure (or the Military Services' COOL programs)	24. All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)
3. DOD Education and Employment Initiative	25. Compensated Work Therapy
4. DOD Operation Warfighter Program	26. Dependents Educational Assistance Program (or Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance)
5. DOD Tuition Assistance	27. Educational and Vocational Counseling (or Chapter 36)
6. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve	28. Post-9/11 GI Bill
7. Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (or SkillBridge)	29. Reserve Educational Assistance Program
8. Military OneSource Spouse Career Center	30. VA Work-study Program
9. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	31. Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership
10. Transition Assistance Advisors	32. VetSuccess on Campus
11. Troops to Teachers Grant Program	33. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
12. United Services Military Apprenticeship Program	34. Warrior Training Advancement Course
	35. Warriors to Workforce
<b>Department of Education (Education)</b>	<b>Office of Personnel Management (OPM)</b>
13. Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success	36. Vets to Feds Career Development Program
14. Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant	
15. Veterans Upward Bound	<b>Small Business Administration (SBA)</b>
<b>Department of Energy (DOE)</b>	37. Boots to Business Reboot
16. DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, the Federal Energy Management Program	38. Service-Disabled Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program
	39. Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program
<b>Department of Health and Human Services</b>	40. Veterans Business Outreach Center
17. Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing Program	41. Women Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program
<b>Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Coast Guard</b>	<b>Jointly Administered</b>
18. Coast Guard Retiree Services Program	42. All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill) – Selected Reserve <sup>a</sup>
19. Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance Program	43. Coast Guard Transition Assistance Program (Coast Guard TAP) <sup>b,c</sup>
20. Coast Guard Tuition Assistance/Voluntary Education	44. DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP) <sup>c,d</sup>
	45. Tuition Assistance Top Up <sup>e</sup>
<b>Department of Labor (DOL)</b>	<b>Tax Expenditure</b>
21. Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program	<b>Department of the Treasury (Treasury)</b>
22. Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program	1. Tax exclusion for GI Bill Benefits

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-19-97R

**Accessible Data for Figure 1: Federal Programs and Tax Expenditures Whose Primary Purpose is to Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families**

- Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
1. Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program
- Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Defense (DOD)**
2. DOD Discretionary Certification & Licensure (or the Military Services' COOL programs)
  3. DOD Education and Employment Initiative
  4. DOD Operation Warfighter Program
  5. DOD Tuition Assistance
  6. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
  7. Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (or SkillBridge)
  8. Military OneSource Spouse Career Center
  9. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities
  10. Transition Assistance Advisors
  11. Troops to Teachers Grant Program
  12. United Services Military Apprenticeship Program
- Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Education (Education)**
13. Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success
  14. Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

15. Veterans Upward Bound

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Energy (DOE)**

16. DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, the Federal Energy Management Program

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

17. Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing Program

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Coast Guard**

18. Coast Guard Retiree Services Program

19. Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance Program

20. Coast Guard Tuition Assistance/Voluntary Education

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Labor (DOL)**

21. Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program

22. Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of State (State)**

23. Veterans Innovation Partnership

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

24. All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)

25. Compensated Work Therapy

26. Dependents Educational Assistance Program (or Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance)

27. Educational and Vocational Counseling (or Chapter 36)

28. Post-9/11 GI Bill

29. Reserve Educational Assistance Program

30. VA Work-study Program

31. Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership

32. VetSuccess on Campus

33. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

34. Warrior Training Advancement Course

35. Warriors to Workforce Program

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Office of Personnel Management (OPM)**

36. Vets to Feds Career Development Program

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Small Business Administration (SBA)**

37. Boots to Business Reboot

38. Service-Disabled Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program

39. Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program

40. Veterans Business Outreach Center

41. Women Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program OK

**Programs that provide funding and benefits: Jointly Administered**

42. All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill) -- Selected Reserve

43. Coast Guard Transition Assistance Program (Coast Guard TAP)

44. DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP)

45. Tuition Assistance Top Up

**Tax Expenditure: Department of the Treasury (Treasury)**

1. Tax exclusion for GI Bill Benefits

Notes: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. For more detailed information on program descriptions, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements, see enclosure II.

<sup>a</sup>The All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance—Selected Reserve program is jointly administered by VA, DOD, and DHS.

<sup>b</sup>Coast Guard TAP is jointly administered by the U.S. Coast Guard representing DHS, DOD, VA, DOL, Education, and SBA.

<sup>c</sup>DOL officials said that TAP is an interagency program administered by several agencies, including DOD, VA, DOL, SBA, OPM, Education, and DHS-Coast Guard and that the portion of TAP administered by DOD is not generally considered a separate program

than the portion administered by DHS-Coast Guard. GAO has previously reported that both DOD and DHS-Coast Guard participate in the TAP interagency governance structure responsible for the TAP curriculum. However, for the purposes of this report we list DOD TAP and Coast Guard TAP as separate programs because DOD provides TAP oversight and governance for the military services (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines), while DHS-Coast Guard administers TAP for the Coast Guard. Moreover, the agencies do not use the same regulations in administering the programs. GAO has previously reported separately on DOD TAP and Coast Guard TAP. See GAO-18-23 and GAO-18-135.

<sup>d</sup>DOD TAP is jointly administered by DOD, VA, DOL, Education, OPM, SBA, and the U.S. Coast Guard representing DHS.

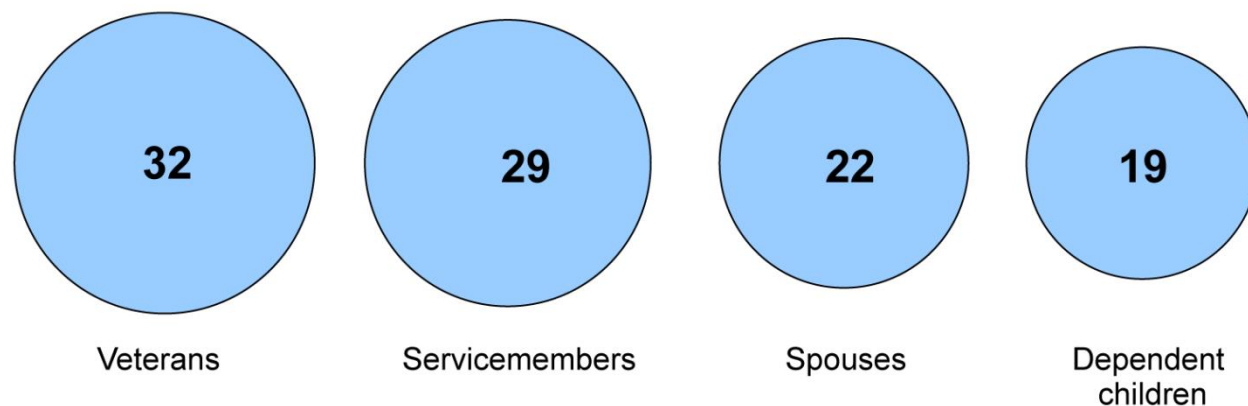
<sup>e</sup>VA administers Tuition Assistance Top Up in conjunction with DOD. Tuition Assistance benefits are administered by each branch of service (each branch determines their own award amounts, eligibility, restrictions, and application process) and are typically earned based on service.

## Various Federal Programs Are Available To Help Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families Achieve Civilian Employment

### More Than Half of the Programs Identified Serve Veterans, While Many Serve Servicemembers and a Few Serve Spouses and Dependent Children

Of the 45 programs we identified, 32 serve veterans while another 29 programs serve servicemembers (see fig. 2). In addition, 22 programs serve servicemembers' or veterans' spouses and another 19 programs serve their dependent children. One for dependent children is the Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant program, which provides increased federal student aid to undergraduates whose parent or guardian died as a result of their service in Iraq or Afghanistan. This count of programs does not equal 45 because some programs serve more than one type of beneficiary. For example, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, a DOL-administered program, provides employment services to servicemembers, veterans, and their spouses and dependent children.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2: Number of Federal Programs Whose Primary Purpose Is to Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families, by Type of Beneficiary Served**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-19-97R

Note: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. We identified 45 programs whose primary purpose is to provide education, employment, or self-employment assistance to servicemembers, veterans, or their families. The number of programs does not equal 45 because some programs serve more than one type of beneficiary.

**Accessible Data for Figure 2: Number of Federal Programs Whose Primary Purpose Is to Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families, by Type of Beneficiary Served**

Veterans	Servicemembers	Spouses	Dependent children
32	29	22	19

### Most Programs Identified Offer Multiple Types of Services

<sup>7</sup>Jobs for Veterans State Grants are used to fund the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program and the Local Veterans Employment Representative Program, which had been counted as separate programs in other GAO reports. See GAO, *Multiple Employment and Training Programs: Providing Information and Colocating Services and Consolidating Administrative Structures Could Promote Efficiencies*, GAO-11-92 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 13, 2011).

Of the 45 programs we identified, 30 provide multiple types of services, such as the DOD Transition Assistance Program, which provides all three categories of services we analyzed: education, employment, and self-employment assistance. We identified 35 programs that provide education services. Additionally, 32 provide employment services, such as the Troops to Teachers grant program, which provides job referrals and referrals to additional services (see fig. 3).



**Figure 3: Number of Federal Programs Whose Primary Purpose Is to Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families, by Type of Service Provided**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-19-97R

Note: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. GAO identified 45 programs whose primary purpose is to provide education, employment, or self-employment assistance to servicemembers, veterans, or their families. The number of programs does not equal 45 because some programs provide more than one type of service.

**Accessible Data for Figure 3: Number of Federal Programs Whose Primary Purpose Is to Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families, by Type of Service Provided**

Education assistance	Employment assistance	Multiple types	Self-employment assistance
35	32	30	19

### Programs Providing Education Services

Thirty-five programs provided education services (see table 1). For example, the DOD Discretionary Certification and Licensure program—otherwise known as the Military Services’ Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) programs—provides a number of education opportunities and benefits, including covering three kinds of certification and licensure fees—those for preparation, attainment, and maintenance or renewal to obtain and stay current on certifications and licenses. We identified one tax expenditure related to education. Specifically, GI Bill benefits are exempt from federal taxation.

**Table 1: Federal Programs and Tax Expenditure Providing Education Services to Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families**

Program name	Services provided
1. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
2. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)—Selected Reserve	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
3. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success	Education services and Employment services
4. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Retiree Services Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
5. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
6. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Transition Assistance Program (Coast Guard TAP)	Education services and Employment services
7. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Tuition Assistance	Education services
8. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Compensated Work Therapy	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
9. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Dependents Educational Assistance Program (or Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance)	Education services and Employment services
10. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Discretionary Certification & Licensure (or the Military Services' COOL programs)	Education services
11. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Education and Employment Initiative	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
12. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Operation Warfighter Program	Education services and Employment services
13. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP)	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
14. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Tuition Assistance	Education services
15. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, the Federal Energy Management Program	Education services and Employment services
16. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Educational and Vocational Counseling (or Chapter 36)	Education services and Employment services

Program name	Services provided
17. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
18. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program	Education services and Employment services
19. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant Program	Education services
20. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (or SkillBridge)	Education services and Employment services
21. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Military OneSource Spouse Career Center	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
22. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Post-9/11 GI Bill	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
23. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Reserve Educational Assistance Program	Education services and Employment services
24. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Service-Disabled Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program	Education services and Self-Employment assistance
25. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
26. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> The Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership	Education services and Employment services
27. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Troops to Teachers Grant Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
28. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Tuition Assistance Top Up	Education services
29. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> United Services Military Apprenticeship Program	Education services and Employment services
30. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing Program	Education services and Employment services
31. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Upward Bound	Education services
32. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> VetSuccess on Campus	Education services and Employment services
33. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
34. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Warrior Training Advancement Course	Education services and Employment services

Program name	Services provided
35. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Warriors to Workforce Program	Education services and Employment services
1. <b>Tax expenditure:</b> Tax exclusion for GI Bill benefits	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance

Source: GAO analysis of survey data | GAO-19-97R

Note: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. For detailed information on these programs, including descriptions of services, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements see enclosure II, organized by administering agency and program name.

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### Programs Providing Employment Services

Thirty-two federal programs provide employment services and one tax expenditure supports employment (see table 2). For example, to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force, the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration program provides job search assistance, job readiness training, job referrals, and on-the-job training, among other employment services.

**Table 2: Federal Programs and Tax Expenditure Providing Employment Services to Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families**

Program name	Services provided
1. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
2. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)—Selected Reserve	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
3. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success	Employment services and Education services
4. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Retiree Services Program	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
5. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance Program	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
6. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Transition Assistance Program (Coast Guard TAP)	Employment services and Education services

Program name	Services provided
7. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Compensated Work Therapy	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
8. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Dependents Educational Assistance Program (or Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance)	Employment services and Education services
9. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Education and Employment Initiative	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
10. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Operation Warfighter Program	Employment services and Education services
11. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP)	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
12. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, The Federal Energy Management Program	Employment services and Education services
13. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Educational and Vocational Counseling (or Chapter 36)	Employment services and Education services
14. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
15. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program	Employment services and Education services
16. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program	Employment services
17. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (or SkillBridge)	Employment services and Education services
18. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Military OneSource Spouse Career Center	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
19. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Post-9/11 GI Bill	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance
20. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Reserve Educational Assistance Program	Employment services and Education services
21. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	Employment services, Education services and Self-Employment assistance

Program name	Services provided
22. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Transition Assistance Advisors	Employment services
23. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Troops to Teachers Grant Program	Employment services, Education services and Self- Employment assistance
24. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> United Services Military Apprenticeship Program	Employment services and Education services
25. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing Program	Employment services and Education services
26. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Innovation Partnership	Education services and Self- Employment assistance
27. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership	Employment services and Education services
28. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Vets to Feds Career Development Program	Employment services
29. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> VetSuccess on Campus	Employment services and Education services
30. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment	Employment services, Education services and Self- Employment assistance
31. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Warrior Training Advancement Course	Employment services and Education services
32. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Warriors to Workforce Program	Employment services and Education services
1. <b>Tax expenditure:</b> Tax exclusion for GI Bill benefits	Employment services, Education services and Self- Employment assistance

Source: GAO analysis of survey data | GAO-19-97R

Note: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. For detailed information on these programs, including descriptions of services, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements see enclosure II, organized by administering agency and program name.

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### Programs Providing Self-Employment Assistance

Nineteen programs provide self-employment assistance and one tax expenditure provides self-employment services (see table 3). For example, the Boots to Business Reboot program provides veterans and spouses and dependent children self-employment services such as training in business fundamentals and developing a business plan.

**Table 3: Federal Programs and Tax Expenditure Providing Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families**

Program name	Services provided
1. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
2. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)—Selected Reserve	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
3. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Boots to Business Reboot	Self-employment assistance
4. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Retiree Services Program	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
5. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance Program	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
6. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Compensated Work Therapy	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
7. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Education and Employment Initiative	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
8. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP)	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
9. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
10. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Military OneSource Spouse Career Center	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
11. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Post-9/11 GI Bill	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
12. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Service-Disabled Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program	Self-employment assistance and Education services

Program name	Services provided
13. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
14. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Troops to Teachers Grant Program	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
15. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program	Self-employment assistance
16. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Business Outreach Center	Self-employment assistance
17. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Innovation Partnership	Self-Employment assistance and Employment services
18. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services
19. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Women Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program	Self-employment assistance
1. <b>Tax expenditure:</b> Tax exclusion for GI Bill benefits	Self-Employment assistance, Employment services and Education services

Source: GAO analysis of survey data | GAO-19-97R

Note: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. For detailed information on these programs, including descriptions of services, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements see enclosure II, organized by administering agency and program name.

For detailed information on these programs, including descriptions of services, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements see enclosure II, organized by administering agency and program name.

### Programs Providing Multiple Types of Services

Thirty programs and one tax expenditure provide a combination of education, employment, and/or self-employment assistance (see table 4). For example, DOD’s Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP) provides education, employment, and self-employment services to servicemembers preparing to transition to civilian life. In particular, as part of DOD TAP, servicemembers can elect to attend a 2-day Accessing Higher Education class that, among other things, teaches participants how to use publicly available resources to make more informed decisions about selecting a college. In addition, most separating and retiring servicemembers are required to attend a DOL Employment Workshop as part of DOD TAP. This class teaches servicemembers how to craft a resume, search for jobs, and interview for positions. Finally, for self-employment assistance, servicemembers participating in TAP can elect to enroll in SBA’s 2-day Boots to Business class, which helps servicemembers assess whether to start their own business.



**Table 4: Federal Programs Providing a Combination of Education, Employment, and/or Self-Employment Assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families**

Program name	Services provided
1. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill )	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
2. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
3. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success	Education services and Employment services
4. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Retiree Services Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
5. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
6. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Coast Guard Transition Assistance Program (Coast Guard TAP)	Education services and Employment services
7. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Compensated Work Therapy	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
8. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Dependents Educational Assistance Program	Education services and Employment services
9. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Education and Employment Initiative	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
10. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Operation Warfighter Program	Education services and Employment services
11. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP)	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
12. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, The Federal Energy Management Program	Education services and Employment services
13. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Educational and Vocational Counseling (or Chapter 36)	Education services and Employment services
14. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance

Program name	Services provided
15. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program	Education services and Employment services
16. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (or SkillBridge)	Education services and Employment services
17. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Military OneSource Spouse Career Center	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
18. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Post-9/11 GI Bill	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
19. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Reserve Educational Assistance Program	Education services and Employment services
20. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Service-Disabled Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program	Education services and Self-Employment assistance
21. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Spouse Education and Career Opportunities	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
22. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Troops to Teachers Grant Program	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
23. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> United Services Military Apprenticeship Program	Education services and Employment services
24. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing Program	Education services and Employment services
25. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Innovation Partnership	Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
26. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership	Education services and Employment services
27. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> VetSuccess on Campus	Education services and Employment services
28. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance
29. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Warrior Training Advancement Course	Education services and Employment services
30. <b>Programs that provide funding and benefits:</b> Warriors to Workforce	Education services and Employment services

Program name	Services provided
1. <b>Tax Expenditure:</b> Tax exclusion for GI Bill benefits	Education services, Employment services and Self-Employment assistance

Source: GAO analysis of survey data | GAO-19-97R

Note: The program information in this figure was provided by agency officials and we did not independently verify it. For detailed information on these programs, including descriptions of services, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements see enclosure II, organized by administering agency and program name.

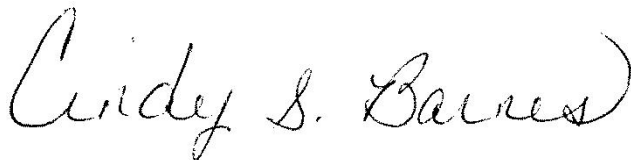
For detailed information on these programs, including descriptions of services, beneficiaries, and eligibility requirements see enclosure II, organized by administering agency and program name.

### Agency Comments

We provided copies of this draft report to the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Labor, State, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs as well as the Internal Revenue Service, Office of Personnel Management and the Small Business Administration, for review and comment. We received technical comments from the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Homeland Security, Labor, and Veterans Affairs and the Office of Personnel Management, which we incorporated as appropriate. The Departments of Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, State, and Treasury, and the Small Business Administration and the Internal Revenue Service told us that they had no comments on the draft report.

We are sending copies of this report to appropriate congressional committees and the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Labor, State, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs as well as the Acting Director of the Office of Personnel Management, the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this correspondence please contact me at (202) 512-7215 or [brownbarnesc@gao.gov](mailto:brownbarnesc@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in enclosure III.



Cindy S. Brown Barnes  
 Director  
 Education, Workforce, and Income Security  
 Enclosures – 3

## Enclosure I: Scope and Methodology

This enclosure summarizes our work to identify federal programs that help servicemembers, veterans, and their families obtain education and skills for civilian employment and to describe these programs' characteristics. To address this objective, we (1) developed criteria for defining and identifying programs; (2) identified applicable tax expenditures; and (3) developed and administered a survey to gather program information from federal agencies. We also interviewed officials from federal agencies who oversee these programs, and reviewed relevant federal laws, regulations, policies, and past GAO reports. The information presented in this report about programs was provided by agency officials. We did not independently verify program information.

### Identifying Federal Agency Programs

To address our objective, we identified federal programs through the following four-step process:

#### **Step 1**

We established a definition for “programs” to clarify the types of federal programs and activities to be included in our list because no universal definition for “program” exists. Past GAO work and OMB have defined “program” in broad terms.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, we used the definition we previously developed for a similar review.<sup>9</sup> Due to the differing contexts of our reviews, we modified our definition to make it pertinent to the types of services included in this review.<sup>10</sup>

For the purposes of this report, we established the following definitions.

### Definition of Terms

- **Program:** Federally funded organized set of activities directed toward a specific purpose or goal administered by a federal agency in fiscal year 2017. These activities may include assistance in attaining credentials, pursuing higher education, seeking employment, and achieving on-the-job training and can be administered in a number of different ways such as programs administered directly by federal agencies or grants.
- **Active-duty servicemembers:** Those who are currently serving on active duty in the United States Armed Forces: this includes activated members of the National Guard and Reserve under Title 10 (full-time duty in the armed forces) or Title 32 (duty performed for which National Guard receives pay from federal government)
- **DHS:** Department of Homeland Security
- **DOD:** Department of Defense
- **DOE:** Department of Energy
- **DOL:** Department of Labor

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<sup>8</sup>GAO, *A Glossary of Terms Used in the Federal Budget Process*, GAO-05-734SP (Washington, D.C.: September 2005); OMB, Circular No. A-11, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget* (July 2017).

<sup>9</sup>GAO, *Military and Veteran Support: DOD and VA Programs That Address the Effects of Combat and Transition to Civilian Life*, GAO-15-24 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 7, 2014).

<sup>10</sup>GAO-15-24 examined DOD and VA programs that address the effects of combat—including physical, mental or social health—on post-9/11 active-duty servicemembers or their spouses or dependents. In contrast, this review focuses on programs primarily designed to help servicemembers, veterans, and their families obtain the skills and education they need for civilian employment. Consequently, the types of services included in our program definition differ from those cited in GAO-15-24.

- **Education:** Department of Education
- **Family:** the spouse and dependent child(ren) of servicemembers or veterans
- **HHS:** Department of Health and Human Services
- **IRS:** Internal Revenue Service
- **Military connected individuals:** Active-duty servicemembers, veterans, and their spouses and dependent children
- **Military services:** Departments of the Army; Air Force, and Navy (including the Marine Corps); the Coast Guard; and the reserve components for each of the military services, including the National Guard
- **OPM:** Office of Personnel Management
- **Primary purpose:** Key reason for which the program or activity was designed or created (or one of its main missions or objectives) as stated in the agency's description of the program or activity
- **Public:** The broader civilian community in the United States, including citizens, public and private employers, police, and court systems
- **SBA:** Small Business Administration
- **State:** Department of State
- **Treasury:** Department of Treasury
- **USDA:** Department of Agriculture
- **VA:** Department of Veterans Affairs
- **Veteran:** A person who served in the military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable (this includes active Guard and reserve components that have deployed but are still serving in the reserve component)

#### IA. Criteria for including programs in our review

We included programs with the primary purpose of offering education, employment, or self-employment services that servicemembers, veterans, and their families may use to achieve civilian employment. We included programs that offer one or more of the following:

- **Education Assistance:** Programs were included that provide assistance, support, or benefits in obtaining a general education or education and vocational training toward degrees or certifications: includes educational counseling or assessments to help servicemembers, veterans, their spouses, or children decide what type of education to pursue, develop a plan for financing their education, and select a school and includes assistance, support, or benefits in obtaining certifications, professional licenses, or other credentials.
- **Employment Assistance:** Programs were included that provide assistance, support, or benefits in preparing for and obtaining skills for civilian employment: includes apprenticeships, on-the-job training experiences, career counseling and supports to help servicemembers, veterans or their families identify what career to pursue, and programs that link individuals with prospective employers.
- **Self-Employment Assistance:** Programs were included that provide assistance, support, or benefits in considering, preparing for, or obtaining skills for self-employment (does not include loan programs because such programs do not impart skills that military-connected individuals may use to prepare for civilian employment or self-employment).

- We also included programs whose primary purpose meets our criteria above, but which provide the education, employment, or self-employment assistance to one or more sub-populations of military connected-individuals, such as those who have been wounded, have a disability, or are experiencing homelessness.

#### IB. Criteria for excluding programs from our review

The following were excluded:

- Programs that serve individuals without a current or prior connection to military service (for instance, programs that are available to the general public are not included even if these programs give preference to servicemembers, veterans, or their families);
- Programs that serve target populations other than military-connected individuals;
- Programs for which post-9/11 Iraq and Afghanistan servicemembers, veterans, or their families are not eligible, such as efforts aimed only at veterans of conflicts or wars prior to Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn;
- Programs that provide informational services, such as web-based or printed materials involving a passive, one-way transmittal of information (e.g., National Resource Directory);
- Programs developed and administered by individual military installations or VA hospitals specifically for the populations they serve at those locations;
- Programs administered by the military service branches, specifically the Departments of the Army, Air Force, and Navy (including the Marine Corps) or the reserve components for military services, including the National Guard, unless they are offered DOD-wide and have an overarching DOD policy (for example, Army specific programs are excluded). However, we do not exclude Coast Guard programs governed by Coast-Guard specific policies or regulations because the Coast Guard is overseen by DHS. Thus, Coast Guard programs may be administered differently than similar DOD programs administered by the Air Force, Army, or Navy that are governed by an overarching DOD policy.
- Programs that are pilots or demonstrations;
- Programs conducted for research; and
- Programs that may have been created or revised to meet our inclusion criteria after fiscal year 2017.

### **Step 2**

We identified publicly available sources of information that contain lists of relevant federal programs. We identified these sources based on our previously published work, discussions with our internal experts on research methods, and online searches. For example, we searched the National Resource Directory—a website that connects wounded warriors, servicemembers, veterans, their families and their caregivers to programs and services that support them. We also searched the official websites of the 24 federal agencies required to participate in the Veterans Employment Initiative by Executive Order 13518: *Employment of Veterans in the*

*Federal Government* such as the Department of the Treasury.<sup>11</sup> Table 1 below provides the name and description of each source we used. We searched these sources for the following key terms: “veteran” or “veterans” or “service person” or “service persons” or “service member” or “service members” or “serviceperson” or “servicepersons” or “servicemember” or “servicemembers” or “reservist” or “reservists” or “reserve component” or “reserve components.” Two analysts independently reviewed the sources for these terms and determined whether each use of the term identified a program that met our criteria for inclusion. The two analysts then reconciled any differences they may have had in their determinations.

**Table 1: Sources GAO Used to Identify Federal Programs That Provide Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Services to Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families**

Source	Description
Caregiver Resource Directory (CRD)	The CRD provides information in a manner that is intended to enable caregivers to quickly identify many of the available government and nonprofit resources that address their particular needs and requirements.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)	The CFDA is a General Services Administration database of federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. It contains financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by all agencies of the federal government. The primary purpose of the CFDA is to assist users in identifying programs that meet specific objectives of potential applicants and to provide general information on federal programs.
Federal agency websites	The official websites of the 24 federal agencies required to participate in the Veterans Employment Initiative by Executive Order 13518: <i>Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government</i> .
GAO-11-92	Among other things, this report identified federal programs that provide employment and training services for a broad population of job seekers that also included veterans.
GAO-15-24	Among other things, this report identified federal programs that offered multiple types of services to help transitioning servicemembers and their families’ transition and readjust to civilian life in fiscal year 2014.
Military OneSource	Military OneSource is a DOD-funded program that provides information and referral to services for military servicemembers and their families through a website as well as counseling. Information provided includes, but is not limited to, information related to deployment, reunion, relationships, grief, spouse employment and education, parenting and childhood.
National Resource Directory (NRD)	The NRD is a partnership among DOD, VA, and the DOL that seeks to connect wounded and other servicemembers, veterans, their families, and caregivers to programs and services that support them. Information contained within the NRD website is from federal, state, and local government agencies; veteran and military service organizations; non-profit and community-based organizations; and academic institutions and professional associations that provide assistance to wounded warriors and their families.

Source: GAO analysis of publicly available sources identified during the course of our audit work. | GAO-19-97R

Note: To identify tax expenditures (credits, deductions, deferrals, or preferential tax rates), we reviewed the list of tax expenditures contained in the Office of Management and Budget’s Fiscal Year 2019 Analytical Perspectives as well as the Joint Committee on Taxation’s Estimates of Federal Tax Expenditures for Fiscal Years 2017-2021.

### Step 3

We used the definitions and sources from steps 1 and 2 to develop a preliminary list of the relevant programs. In addition, three GAO analysts independently reviewed all of the sources and documented a judgment about whether the programs identified conformed to the definitions we developed in step 1, and reconciled any differences as needed.

<sup>11</sup>Executive Order 13518 created the Veterans Employment Initiative to boost employment of military veterans, especially from Iraq and Afghanistan, in the federal government. Exec. Order No. 13,518, 74 Fed. Reg. 58,533 (Nov. 9, 2009).

## Step 4

For each program on our preliminary list, we sent two surveys to the federal agency primarily responsible for administering that program, and also requested that agency officials complete the same survey for any additional programs they thought should be included in our catalog. According to agency officials, some programs we had initially identified were not active in fiscal year 2017 so we removed these programs from our list.

This four-step process identified 44 separate programs. In carrying out this four-step process, we did not conduct an independent legal analysis of the statutory or regulatory basis or requirements for any of the programs we identified. Based on agency comments on our draft report, we added one more program to our inventory, bringing the total number of programs identified to 45.

To help convey our findings, we developed categories to group the types of service provided by the programs. The categories include (1) education assistance, (2) employment assistance, and (3) self-employment assistance. Because some programs offer more than one type of service, programs can fall into more than one category or service type. For example, VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program provides education, employment, and self-employment services to eligible veterans with service-connected disability ratings. Although a service may be provided by many programs or activities, the service may or may not be commonly used by servicemembers or veterans. For example, the services provided through the TAP program are widespread because all eligible, transitioning servicemembers are generally required to participate in the program and their needs may vary significantly.

Finally, our scope was limited to identifying federal programs based on the types of service provided to servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and children; we did not analyze these programs to identify instances of fragmentation, overlap, duplication, or gaps in benefits or services. In addition, the programs included in our review were accurate and up to date when we received the responses from the agency in the summer of 2018. However, some may change over time. For example, OPM, HHS, and VA told us of a new jointly-administered program to help veterans enter the cyber-security field called Cyber Vets. However, because the program was not operational in fiscal year 2017, it was not included in our list.

### Identifying Tax Expenditures of Selected Programs

The federal government provides assistance to servicemembers, veterans, and their families through programs and tax expenditures. Tax expenditures result in forgone revenue to the federal government, such as by excluding certain program benefits from an individual's taxable income. We identified tax expenditures that relate to programs through which the federal government supports military-connected individuals in pursuing education or acquiring skills for civilian employment and, to the extent possible, reported estimates for these expenditures for fiscal year 2017.

To identify relevant tax expenditures, we analyzed three government publications that contain tax expenditure estimates for fiscal year 2017.<sup>12</sup> The following three documents were searched:

1. Joint Committee on Taxation, *Estimates of Federal Tax Expenditures for Fiscal Years 2017–2021*;

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<sup>12</sup>We used the same search terms when conducting the search of programs within the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). These search terms are: "veteran" or "veterans" or "service person" or "service persons" or "service member" or "service members" or "serviceperson" or "servicepersons" or "servicemember" or "servicemembers" or "reservist" or "reservists" or "reserve component" or "reserve components."



2. Congressional Research Service, *Tax Expenditure Compendium*, December 2016; and
3. OMB's Analytical Perspectives, FY 2019 Table 13 Tax Expenditures.

Specifically, we conducted an automated key word search on the three documents and recorded which pages contained the key words. Two GAO analysts independently reviewed the key word results, interpreted the underlying context, and identified tax expenditures they determined should be included in our review. The two analysts then reconciled any discrepancies between their determinations.

### Survey of Agencies with Education, Employment, or Self-Employment Programs

To gather information on each of the programs we identified, we developed a questionnaire that asked agencies to provide information on each program they administer, such as program purpose, beneficiary eligibility, and beneficiaries served. We then conducted a survey of the federal agencies that administer each program. We pre-tested a draft of the questionnaire with agency officials at VA and DOD. We interviewed these officials and solicited their feedback to ensure that (1) the questions were clear and unambiguous, (2) terminology was used correctly, (3) the survey did not place an undue burden on agency officials, (4) the information could feasibly be obtained, and (5) the survey was comprehensive and unbiased. We revised the survey, included separating it into two questionnaires, based on feedback by agency officials. The first questionnaire focused on collecting qualitative information such as program name, objectives, and services provided. The second questionnaire focused on collecting quantitative data such as program funding and numbers served.

We sent two questionnaires per program to the agencies that administer that program by email in an attached spreadsheet that respondents could complete and return electronically after entering responses from pull-down menus or into open answer boxes. We sent the form to agency points of contact on June 14, 2018, and provided two separate deadlines for their completion. We reached a 100 percent response for the first questionnaire, on which this report is based, in August 2018. At the time of this review we were still collecting survey responses for the second survey, which may inform future work. We edited agency responses for consistency and readability and noted any responses by the agency that seemed contradictory or unclear. We then sent each agency the portion of the report that contained the programs administered by that agency for a final review to ensure that all changes we made were accurate, and all issues had been clarified.

Because this was not a sample survey, it has no sampling errors. However, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey may introduce errors, commonly referred to as nonsampling errors. For example, difficulties in interpreting a particular question, variable sources of information available to respondents, or errors entering data into a database or analyzing them can introduce unwanted variability into the survey results. In developing the questionnaires and collecting and analyzing the data, we took steps to minimize nonsampling error. For example, to minimize difficulties interpreting a particular question we incorporated the suggestions from an independent reviewer to add explicit instructions to use the pull-down menus and consistently phrased requests for information in the questionnaires. To minimize manual data entry errors of collected survey data, we utilized a software program to automate the file transfer process and performed a line-by-line verification of the program code.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2018 to January 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our

findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.



**Enclosure II: Detailed Inventory of Federal Programs to Help Servicemembers, Veterans, or Their Families Achieve Civilian Employment, by Agency and Program Name**

**Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities for Military Veterans Competitive Grants Program**

**Federal Administering Agency**

Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**Program Description**

Provides grants to nonprofit organizations. These grants support programs and services to help establish and enhance farming and ranching opportunities for military veterans.

**Type of Beneficiary Served**

Servicemembers and veterans

Source: USDA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

**Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility**

Nonprofit organizations are expected to use grant funds to benefit veterans interested in farming and ranching opportunities. Specifically, grant funds are available to offer programs and services to establish and enhance farming and ranching opportunities for military veterans.

**Education Services Provided**

1) Tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 2) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 3) living stipend or housing allowance, 4) referrals to additional services, 5) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), and 6) remedial or refresher coursework

**Employment Services Provided**

1) Employment counseling, 2) job development, 3) job readiness training, 4) job referrals, 5) job-search or job placement activities, 6) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 7) on-the-job training, 8) apprenticeship training (paid work component), 9) non-paid work experience, 10) resume assistance, 11) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, 12) living stipend, 13) housing allowance, and 14) referrals to additional services

**Self-Employment Services Provided**

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 7) mentoring, 8) training to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.), and 9) training on commercial supply chain opportunities



# DOD Discretionary Certification & Licensure (the Military Services' Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) programs)

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

## Program Description

Enables servicemembers to obtain professional credentials related to military training and skills that they acquired during their military service and helps them translate them into civilian occupations.

The program allows payment for the following expenses: 1) professional accreditation, 2) federal occupational licenses, 3) state-imposed and professional licenses, 4) professional certification, and 5) related expenses.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Members of the armed forces. Specific eligibility criteria vary by military service.<sup>13</sup>

## Education Services Provided

1) Books and materials allowance, 2) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 3) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 4) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 5) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 6) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs includes activities surrounding maintaining continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees.

## Employment Services Provided

None

## Self-Employment Services Provided

None

<sup>13</sup>For example, the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) programs provide financial assistance for their respective enlisted personnel to participate in credentialing opportunities. However, the military services have different program eligibilities for officers. The Army COOL program provides financial assistance for officers, while the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force COOL programs exclude financial assistance for officers.



## DOD Education and Employment Initiative

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Provides educational assistance, career planning, and employment support to assist recovering servicemembers to improve their education, career, and/or vocational readiness prior to transition to civilian life.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Active-duty servicemembers assigned to a military service Wounded Warrior Program or referred to the Disability Evaluation System must obtain command approval to participate and be medically cleared by a member of their recovery team and/or a physician involved in their ongoing treatment. Ideally, the recovering servicemember should have more than 180 days remaining on active duty before they separate.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational/ vocational counseling and assessment, 2) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs), 3) individualized case management and career plan development to determine career goals or educational, vocational, or personal goals and interests, 4) assistance with seeking traditional and non-traditional educational and trade school opportunities, and 5) licensure and certification testing

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) job readiness and training activities, 3) employment referrals, 4) employment search and/ or on-the-job training placement services, such as internships or apprenticeships, as authorized by law, 5) resume assistance, 6) interview skills development, 7) job fairs, 8) referrals to additional services, and 9) assistance with employment or educational goals by linking servicemembers to appropriate resources

### Self-Employment Services Provided

Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners)



## DOD Operation Warfighter Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Provides eligible recovering servicemembers with non-paid internship opportunities within the federal government. Allows recovering servicemembers to explore employment interests and enhance overall career readiness through resume building, job skills development, and valuable work experience.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Active-duty servicemembers assigned to a military service Wounded Warrior Program or referred to the Disability Evaluation System. Servicemembers must obtain command approval to participate and be medically cleared by a member of their recovery team and/or a physician involved in their ongoing treatment.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational counseling, 2) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support and assistance with managing internship opportunities), and 3) referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) job readiness training, 3) interview skills development, 4) resume development assistance, 5) employment application preparation, assistance, and coordination, 6) internship enrollment, monitoring, and other administrative support, as needed, 7) non-paid work experience, 8) referrals to additional services, and 9) job fairs

### Self-Employment Services Provided

Mentoring



## DOD Tuition Assistance

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Provides servicemembers with financial assistance to enhance their academic achievement (i.e., earn a degree or certificate) during their off-duty time. This in turn can improve job performance, promotion potential, self-development, and personal quality of life. Currently, tuition assistance can be used to pay for college courses, degrees, or certificates in any discipline desired. It can also be tailored to meet the individual needs of each servicemember.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Members of the military services on active duty and members of the Selected Reserve are eligible to participate.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational counseling, 2) case management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 3) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 4) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes vocational and technical courses offered at community colleges for college credit), and 5) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees)

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Develops and promotes supportive work environments for servicemembers in the reserve component through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities. The program aims to increase awareness of applicable laws and resolve employment conflicts between servicemembers and their employers. The program encourages employers in the United States and territories to support and value the employment of members of the National Guard and Reserves. In turn, this increases the readiness of the reserve components.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Employers, veterans, and uniformed servicemembers, with a focus on reserve component members.

### Education Services Provided

1) Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a DOD program that develops and promotes supportive work environments for servicemembers in the reserve components through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities that increase awareness of applicable laws. The program also seeks to resolve employment conflicts between servicemembers and their employers.

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None





## Job Training, Employment Skills Training, Apprenticeships, and Internships (or SkillBridge)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Allows servicemembers with certain qualifications to participate in civilian job and employment training starting up to six months before they separate from military service and transition to the civilian work force. Such training can include job training, employment skills training, apprenticeships, and internships.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Eligible servicemembers must have completed at least 180 continuous days on active duty and be within six months of their expected discharge or release from active duty. Additionally, servicemembers must initiate their participation and obtain approval from their chain of command.

### Education Services Provided

Apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship)

### Employment Services Provided

The DOD SkillBridge program facilitates participation in employment and training activities including employment counseling, employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessment), job development, job readiness training, job referrals, job-search or job placement activities, occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), on-the-job training, apprenticeship training (paid work component), resume assistance, interview skills development, and referrals to additional services. No employment or training services are provided directly by DOD.

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Military OneSource Spouse Career Center

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Provides military spouses with education and career counseling services through a virtual platform. The Military OneSource Spouse Career Center is an initiative under the DoD's broader Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Spouses

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

All military spouses, regardless of component or pay grade of servicemember are eligible for career center services. Military spouses of servicemembers who have retired or separated from the military are eligible for up to 365 days after separation. The career center uses the same eligibility criteria as Military OneSource.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, and 3) referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job referrals, 4) job-search or job placement activities, 5) resume assistance, 6) interview skills development, 7) referrals to additional services, and 8) job fairs

### Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 2) mentoring, and 3) robust, ongoing engagement between military spouses and career coaches around entrepreneurship including access to the Entrepreneurial Edge Assessment, as well as development of action plans and regular check-ins to assess obstacles to completing milestones



## Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Provides tools, information, and resources to help military spouses reach their educational and career goals.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Spouses

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

All military spouses up to 365 days after separation.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 5) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 6) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 7) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), and 8) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (including activities to maintain continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees)

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job referrals, 5) job-search or job placement activities, 6) resume assistance, 7) interview skills development, 8) referrals to additional services, and 9) job fairs

### Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 2) mentoring, and 3) robust entrepreneurship package designed to lead spouses to resources outside of DOD



## Transition Assistance Advisors

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Assists eligible members of the reserve components with accessing benefits and health care furnished under laws administered by the Secretary of Defense and benefits and health care furnished under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and other federal, state and local agencies.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Reserve component members transitioning between reserve status and active status and their families. Specifically, eligible reserve component members include those transitioning from a reserve status (Title 10 or 32 drilling) to an active status (Title 10 active duty) and those transitioning back to a reserve status (Title 10 or 32 drilling).

### Education Services Provided

Referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Job referrals and 2) referrals to additional services

### Self-Employment Services Provided

Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or Small Business Administration (SBA) resource partners)



## Troops to Teachers Grant Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Helps eligible military personnel begin new careers as teachers in public schools. Provides counseling, assessment, and referral to facilitate employment of eligible members of the armed forces as teachers in public elementary or secondary schools identified in 10 U.S.C. § 1154. The program benefits transitioning servicemembers and veterans by helping them become teachers, especially in high-need schools and in critical subject areas (science, mathematics, foreign language, or special education). The program leverages the knowledge and skills members of the armed forces honed while in the military, such as leadership and managing several people at once. Participants apply these skills in the classroom.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans  
Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Beneficiaries of the program are eligible members of the armed forces, as specified in 10 U.S.C. § 1154.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational counseling and 2) referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) job referrals, 3) job-search or job placement activities, 4) referrals to additional services, and 5) mentoring

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



# United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD)

## Program Description

Allows servicemembers to participate in a formal military training program to improve their job skills and complete civilian apprenticeship requirements while on active duty. Upon program completion, DOD provides a nationally recognized "Certificate of Completion."

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Eligible servicemembers must meet the following four criteria:

1. Be at least 17 years of age.
2. Be on active duty.<sup>14</sup>
3. Have earned a high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) equivalency, or other high school equivalency credential.
4. Be physically capable of performing the essential functions of the apprenticeship program.

## Education Services Provided

1) Case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), and 2) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship)

## Employment Services Provided

1) Occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 2) on-the-job training, and 3) apprenticeship training (paid work component)

## Self-Employment Services Provided

None

<sup>14</sup>Active duty includes servicemembers who are either on permanent active duty or who are members of the Selected Reserve recalled to active duty for at least 12 months.



# Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Education  
(Education)

## Program Description

Encourages institutions of higher education to develop model programs to support veteran student success in postsecondary education. The program coordinates services to address the academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: Education responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Institutions of higher education are eligible to apply for the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success program, which serves all veterans attending the institution of higher education.

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) referrals to additional services, 5) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education, 6) remedial or refresher coursework, and 7) specific services through institutions of higher education that are awarded a grant for a Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success program: admissions, registration, financial aid, academic advising, student health, personal or mental health counseling, career advising, and disabilities services to support veteran students on campus

## Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) job readiness training, 3) job referrals, 4) job-search or job placement activities, 5) resume assistance, 6) interview skills development, 7) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, and 8) referrals to additional services

## Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Education  
(Education)

### Program Description

Provides federal student aid to students whose parent or guardian died as a result of U.S. military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001 if eligibility criteria are met.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Dependent children

Source: Education responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Undergraduate students and students pursuing a teaching certificate who are a dependent child of a veteran who died as a result of U.S. military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. Participants must be U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens. There are two different provisions for eligible students, depending on whether the student has an expected family contribution that falls within the range for Pell Grant eligibility.

### Education Services Provided

1) Books and materials allowance, 2) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 3) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 4) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 5) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 6) living stipend or housing allowance, 7) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education, and 8) remedial or refresher coursework

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None





## Veterans Upward Bound

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Education  
(Education)

### Program Description

Prepares, motivates, and assists military veterans in developing academic and other skills necessary for acceptance into and success in a program of postsecondary education. The specific performance measure is the percentage of participants who enroll in and complete postsecondary education.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: Education responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

An individual is eligible to participate in a Veterans Upward Bound Program if the individual meets the following three requirements:

1. Is a citizen or national of the United States or meets other residency criteria.<sup>15</sup>
2. Is a potential first-generation college student, low-income individual, or an individual who has a high risk for academic failure.
3. Is a person who needs academic support, as determined by the grantee, in order to successfully pursue a program of education beyond high school.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 4) high school or general education development (GED) completion, 5) tutoring fees, 6) books and materials allowance, 7) referrals to additional services, 8) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs), 9) remedial or refresher coursework, 10) advice and assistance in secondary and postsecondary course selection, 11) assistance in preparing for college entrance examinations and completing college admission applications, 12) information on the full range of federal student financial aid programs and benefits and resources for locating public and private scholarships, 13) assistance in completing financial aid applications, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, 14) guidance on and assistance in entry into GED programs or entry into postsecondary education, 15) education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students, including financial planning for postsecondary education, 16) instruction in mathematics through pre-calculus, laboratory science, foreign language, composition, and literature, 17) intensive basic skills development in those academic subjects required for successful completion of a high school equivalency program and for admission to postsecondary education programs, 18) short-term remedial or refresher courses for veterans who are high school graduates but who have delayed pursuing post-secondary education, 19) assistance to veterans in securing support services from other locally available resources such as Veterans Administration, state veterans agencies, veterans associations, and other state and local agencies that serve veterans, and 20) special services, including mathematics and

<sup>15</sup>In addition to citizens, eligible individuals include those who are permanent residents of the United States; are in the United States for a non-temporary purpose and provide evidence from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service of his or her intent to become a permanent resident; are a permanent resident of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; or are a resident of the Freely Associated States—the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau.

science preparation, to enable veterans to make the transition to postsecondary education

**Employment Services Provided**

None

**Self-Employment Services Provided**

None



## DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, the Federal Energy Management Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Energy (DOE)

### Program Description

Introduces students or recent college graduates to DOE's mission and operations as well as other federal agencies' mission and operations. Under the DOE Scholars Program for Veterans, veterans are given preference and are placed at federal agencies in the Washington, D.C. area. Participants engage in various educational experiences within a paid 10-week internship. In addition, the participants interact daily with federal energy managers, learn about the various types of research and projects that federal agencies and national laboratories conduct, learn about energy technology, and gain an understanding of federal agencies' structure while utilizing their education, talents, abilities and skills. The broader DOE Scholars Program is administered for DOE by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), which also administers this special DOE Scholars Program exclusively for veterans.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: DOE responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Applicants must be U.S. veterans and citizens and have earned an undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education.

### Education Services Provided

Living stipend or housing allowance

### Employment Services Provided

1) Resume assistance, 2) interview skills development, 3) living stipend, and 4) housing allowance

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



# Veterans' Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing Program

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

## Program Description

Supports the development and implementation of innovative practice models that enable veterans to earn nursing degrees, expands employment opportunities, and prepares veterans to transition from their military role to that of a civilian professional nurse. The program was designed to increase enrollment, progression, and graduation of veterans from nursing programs and to prepare veterans to transition from their military role to that of a civilian professional nurse. Specifically, schools provide enhanced support services to veterans enabling their enrollment, retention, graduation, and successful passage of the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses. Awarding academic credit is also a focus to save veterans time and maximizes their GI Bill benefits and personal resources. The program's aim is to strengthen the quality of care and expand the nursing workforce through increased enrollment of veterans in baccalaureate nursing programs.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: HHS responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

HHS does not make awards directly to individual veterans; it makes awards to schools of nursing. Eligible applicants are accredited schools of nursing, health care facilities, or a partnership of health care facilities and an accredited school of nursing. A health care facility may include an Indian Health Service health center, Native Hawaiian health center, hospital, federally-qualified health center, rural health clinic, nursing home, home health agency, hospice program, public health clinic, state or local department of public health, skilled nursing facility, ambulatory surgical center, or any other facility designated by the Secretary. All applicant schools of nursing that provide nursing education for program participants must be accredited for the purpose of conferring baccalaureate nursing degrees by a national nurse education accrediting agency or State approval agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Program participants must be honorably or generally discharged servicemember reservists, or National Guard members with prior (formal or informal) medical training, who have not yet earned Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees. Colleges have also accepted soon-to-be-separating servicemembers and active duty servicemembers who wish to become officers with approval from their commanding officers. In addition to being veterans, eligible program participants must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen-nationals, or foreign nationals who possess visas permitting permanent residence in the United States. Individuals on temporary student visas are not eligible.

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 5) other educational testing (e.g., GED, Praxis), 6) tutoring fees, 7) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 8) referrals to additional services, 9) remedial or refresher coursework, and 10) mental and behavioral health counseling, Joint Services Transcripts Reviews, GI Bill guidance, career path planning, mentors, time management skills, and stress reduction techniques

## Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) resume assistance, 8) interview skills development, 9) referrals to additional services, and 10) job fairs

**Self-Employment Services Provided**

None



## Coast Guard Retiree Services Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Coast Guard

### Program Description

The program provides, supports, and strengthens Coast Guard military retiree communications, information services, and other retiree services. The program also supports the lifelong connection and mutually beneficial relationship between the Coast Guard and its military retiree community—the Long Blue Line.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: DHS responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

The program supports Coast Guard active duty members transitioning to retirement and Coast Guard military retirees, annuitants, and survivors.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational counseling and 2) referrals to transition assistance and retiree services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) resume assistance, 3) interview skills development, and 4) referrals to additional services

### Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners) and 2) mentoring



# Coast Guard Spouse Employment Assistance Program

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Coast Guard

## Program Description

Assists spouses with career and employment information and helps military family members learn how to get a job and maintain a career they enjoy. It is not an employment office or placement center.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

All military department servicemembers, spouses, veterans who retired from military service, and dependent children  
Source: DHS responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

All active military spouses or dependents, and retired members and eligible dependents.<sup>16</sup>

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 4) referrals to additional services, 5) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs), and 6) active-duty spouses apply for CLEP and GSST testing. Additionally, the Coast Guard provides tutoring at tutor.com

## Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job referrals, 4) job-search or job placement activities, 5) resume assistance, 6) interview skills development, 7) referrals to additional services, and 8) job fairs

## Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 2) spouses are eligible to attend the Boots to Business 2-day classes offered by all services as part of the Transition Assistance Program

<sup>16</sup>Data on eligible dependents must be included in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.



## Coast Guard Tuition Assistance (Voluntary Education)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Coast Guard

### Program Description

The Coast Guard voluntary education program is designed to assist Coast Guard personnel in broadening academic or technical background by providing funding for off-duty independent education and to provide transcript services, as well as and other educational resources to streamline the attainment of an professional degree.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans  
Source: DHS responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Tuition assistance is authorized for active-duty military members who were on active duty or were a reservist on long-term orders greater than 180 days. Back-to-back short-term orders adding up to more than 180 continuous days does not apply and tuition assistance will not be authorized.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g. aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g. designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 5) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 6) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g. undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 7) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 8) certification and licensure preparation (e.g. college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 9) referrals to additional services, and 10) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs)

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None





# Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Labor (DOL)

## Program Description

Provides services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force and to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems to address the complex problems facing homeless veterans.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: DOL responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) serves two populations: 1) homeless veterans, and 2) incarcerated veterans.

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment, (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST)) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 5) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 6) other educational testing (e.g., GED, Praxis), 7) high school or GED completion, 8) tutoring fees, 9) books and materials allowance, 10) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 11) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 12) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 13) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 14) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (includes activities to maintain continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees,) 15) living stipend or housing allowance, 16) referrals to additional services, 17) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education, 18) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), 19) remedial or refresher coursework, and 20) other employment and supportive services

## Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 8) on-the-job training, 9) apprenticeship training (paid work component), 10) non-paid work experience, 11) resume assistance, 12) interview skills development, 13) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, 14) housing allowance, and 15) referrals to additional services

## Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Labor (DOL)

### Program Description

Provides individualized career services to meet the employment needs of disabled and other eligible veterans identified by the Secretary of Labor. The program funds Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) positions to support this objective. Another objective is to conduct outreach to employers. This outreach includes conducting employer seminars and job search workshops, and establishing job finding clubs. The staff providing these services is called Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and their positions are funded through the program's grant funds. The Jobs for Veterans State Grants program facilitates employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans under states' employment service or One-Stop Career Center delivery system. The program's overarching purpose is to help veterans gain and retain employment.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: DOL responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Priority is to veterans with service-connected disabilities, other disabled veterans, economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans, homeless veterans and veterans with other significant barriers to employment. Other eligible participants include:

- veterans ages 18-24;
- eligible transitioning servicemembers, specifically:
  - transitioning members of the armed forces who have been identified as in need of intensive services (now referred to as Individualized Career Services);
  - members of the armed forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units; and
- spouses or other family caregivers of wounded, ill, or injured members.

### Education Services Provided

None

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) resume assistance, 8) interview skills development, 9) referrals to additional services, 10) job fairs, and 11) individualized career services as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its regulations. DVOP specialist activities include developing an individual employment plan, identifying employment goals and appropriate achievement objectives, and providing labor market information and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals including providing a list of, and information about, eligible training providers

### Self-Employment Services Provided

Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners)



## Veterans Innovation Partnership

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of State (State)

### Program Description

Builds and deploys strategic partnerships between the government and private sector to mobilize resources and networks to promote foreign affairs and program analyst career opportunities for veterans. State provides 12-month, full-time appointments and developmental opportunities to participants in the program.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans

Source: State responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

The program is open to U.S. Armed Forces veterans and transitioning U.S. military who have completed a master's degree or higher in the preferred fields of international business, international relations or affairs, public policy, public administration, or a related field. Eligible veterans must apply within two years of completing their graduate degree, except when precluded from doing so because of their U.S. military service obligation.<sup>17</sup> U.S. Armed Forces reservists and National Guard members are eligible, provided they have completed a minimum of two years of service.

### Education Services Provided

Referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 8) on-the-job training, 9) resume assistance, 10) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, 11) referrals to additional services, and 12) rotational opportunities within the State Department

### Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners) and 2) mentoring

<sup>17</sup>Such individuals have up to six years after degree completion to apply.



## All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides educational benefits towards college degree programs, vocational and technical courses, and other education and training.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses,<sup>18</sup> and dependent children<sup>19</sup>

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

All program participants must have earned a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and have received an honorable discharge unless the individual is currently on active duty.<sup>20</sup> Individuals must also meet additional criteria depending on when they entered military service.

- Individuals who entered military service on or after July 1, 1985 may be eligible unless they specifically elect not to participate. Servicemembers can use the benefits after completing two years of consecutive service. Veterans whose initial obligation was three years or more may use their benefits after completing three years of consecutive active duty.<sup>21</sup> Those whose initial obligation was less than three years may use the benefits after serving two years of active duty.<sup>22</sup> Any period of active duty may be used to meet these requirements, but generally periods of active duty cannot be combined.
- Individuals who were eligible for the Vietnam-era GI Bill benefits as of December 31, 1989 who served on continuous active duty for three years after June 30, 1985, may be eligible for the program.
- Individuals who were involuntarily separated for certain reasons may be eligible. Likewise, persons who received voluntary separation incentives may also be eligible.
- Individuals who converted from the Veterans Educational Assistance Program during open seasons between October 9, 1996 and July 8, 1997, or November 1, 2000 to October 31, 2001, may be eligible. Likewise, certain individuals who served full-time under Title 32 in the National Guard during the period from July 1, 1985 to November 28, 1989 with no previous active duty and who elected the Montgomery GI Bill during the open season from October 9, 1996 through July 8, 1997, may be eligible.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup>This category includes spouses of both servicemembers and veterans.

<sup>19</sup>This category includes dependent children of both servicemembers and veterans. Members of the National Guard and Reserve are also eligible to participate.

<sup>20</sup>The veteran must have received an honorable discharge for the qualifying period of service.

<sup>21</sup>Those discharged early for an acceptable reason may be able to use their benefits in less time.

<sup>22</sup>Those discharged early for an acceptable reason or who signed up for four years in the Selected Reserve may be able to use their benefits in less time.

<sup>23</sup>In addition, in very limited circumstances, dependents of a veteran or servicemember may be eligible for the program if the veteran or servicemember transferred entitlement to those dependents.

### **Education Services Provided**

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments),<sup>24</sup> 2) educational counseling, 3) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 4) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 5) tutoring fees, 6) postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 7) vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 8) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 9) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (includes activities surrounding maintaining continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees,) 10) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), and 11) remedial or refresher coursework

### **Employment Services Provided**

1) Occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 2) on-the-job training, and 3) apprenticeship training (paid work component)

### **Self-Employment Services Provided**

1) Training in developing a business plan, 2) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, and 3) free business consulting and low-cost training by Small Business Development Center advisors who provide aspiring and current small business owners a variety of services including: business plan development, manufacturing assistance, financial packaging and lending assistance, exporting and importing support, disaster recovery assistance, procurement and contracting aid, market research help, business development program support, and healthcare guidance

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<sup>24</sup>The Montgomery GI Bill provides funding for educational needs assessments and educational counseling in addition to the payment of benefits. 38 U.S.C. § 3697A.



## Compensated Work Therapy

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides support to veterans whose mental illness or physical impairment presents a barrier to employment, so that they can secure and maintain community based competitive employment. In particular, this program provides therapeutic work and rehabilitative services, including therapeutic transitional work experience and supported employment services to eligible patients who are veterans. Compensated Work Therapy is a Veterans Health Administration clinical vocational rehabilitation program offered at every VA medical center.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Eligible patients have occupational dysfunctions resulting from their mental health or physical conditions, or have been unsuccessful at obtaining or maintaining stable employment patterns due to mental illnesses or physical impairments, or psychosocial barriers such as legal background or homelessness. Veterans are not required to have a service-connected disability to be eligible for services. To be considered for participation, a veteran must qualify for Compensated Work Therapy as part of their VA healthcare eligibility, want to return to competitive employment, and have barriers to obtaining or retaining employment that require intensive support services.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, and 3) referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 8) on-the-job training, 9) resume assistance, 10) interview skills development, 11) referrals to additional services, 12) job fairs, 13) special employer incentives (i.e. tax credits, wage off-sets, assistance with disability accommodations, etc.), 14) evidence-based supported employment, 15) follow along supports for job retention, and 16) career development

### Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Supported self-employment services provided at limited locations, and 2) referrals to additional resources





## Dependents Educational Assistance Program (or Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or who died either on active duty or as the result of a service-related condition.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Spouses and dependent children  
Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Spouses, surviving spouses, and children (including stepchildren or adopted children) between ages 18 and 26 of veterans:<sup>25</sup>

1. who died from service-connected disabilities;
2. whose service-connected disabilities are considered permanently and totally disabling;
3. who died from any cause while such service-connected disabilities were in existence;
4. who have been listed as missing in action or as prisoners of war for more than 90 days; and
5. who VA determines to have a service-connected, permanent, and total disability. At the time of this determination, such individuals must be members of the armed forces who have been hospitalized or are receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment. VA must also determine that the servicemember is likely to be discharged or released from service due to the service-connected disability.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)), 4) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 5) high school or GED completion, 6) tutoring fees, 7) postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 8) vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 9) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 10) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (includes activities surrounding maintaining continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees,) 11) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education, 12) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), 13) remedial or refresher coursework, 14) specialized restorative training, and 15) specialized vocational training

### Employment Services Provided

1) Occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 2) on-the-job training, and 3) apprenticeship training (paid work component)

<sup>25</sup>Children under the age of 18 may be eligible under special circumstances.

**Self-Employment Services Provided**

None





## Educational and Vocational Counseling (or Chapter 36)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides professional, educational, vocational, and career counseling via vocational interest, aptitude and ability testing; exploration of vocational career opportunities; assistance selecting an appropriate vocational goal; and related objectives.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Servicemembers not expecting a dishonorable discharge may request educational or employment services within 180 days of projected discharge or release from active duty. Veterans must be within one year from the date of discharge or release from active duty. For servicemembers, the projected discharge or release from active duty must be under conditions other than dishonorable. For veterans, the discharge or release from active duty must have been under conditions other than dishonorable. This counseling is also available to individuals who are eligible for VA educational assistance including: Chapter 30—All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program; Chapter 31—Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment; Chapter 32—Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance; Chapter 33—Post-9/11 Educational Assistance; Chapter 35—Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance; Chapter 1606—Educational Assistance for Members of the Selective Service; and Chapter 1607—Reserve Educational Assistance Program.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) referrals to additional services, and 4) benefits coaching and adjustment counseling

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job referrals, 4) job-search or job placement activities, 5) resume assistance, 6) interview skills development, and 7) referrals to additional services

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Post-9/11 GI Bill

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides post-secondary education benefits for individuals with active-duty service after September 10, 2001 or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. Benefits can be used for a range of learning programs including undergraduate and graduate degrees, non-college degree programs, and apprenticeship and on-the-job training.<sup>26</sup> Some servicemembers can transfer their benefits to spouses and dependents.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Individuals who entered active duty after September 10, 2001 may be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Individuals can use the Post-9/11 GI Bill after serving 90 aggregate days on active duty (excluding entry level and skill training), or upon discharge if separated due to a service-connected disability after 30 continuous days of service. Periods of active duty under qualifying sections of Title 10 and Title 32 may be used to establish eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. A high school diploma or equivalency certificate is always required for eligibility. Individuals who are eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty (Chapter 30), the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606), or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) must make an irrevocable election to relinquish eligibility under one of those benefit programs to establish eligibility under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The spouse or children of a person who died in the line of duty while serving as a member of the armed forces may be eligible to use benefits under the Fry Scholarship provision of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Eligibility to transfer entitlement to dependents is determined by DOD.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments),<sup>27</sup> 2) educational counseling, 3) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 4) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 5) tutoring fees, 6) books and materials allowance, 7) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 8) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 9) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (includes activities surrounding maintaining continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees,) 10) living stipend or housing allowance, 11) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), and 12) remedial or refresher coursework.

### Employment Services Provided

1) Occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 2) on-the-job training, 3) apprenticeship training (paid work component), and 4) housing allowance

<sup>26</sup>For more information about the use of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for on-the-job training and apprenticeship see: GAO, *VA Benefits: Increasing Outreach and Measuring Outcomes Would Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship Programs*. GAO-16-51 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 12, 2015).

<sup>27</sup>The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides funding for educational needs assessments and educational counseling in addition to the payment of benefits. 38 U.S.C. § 3697A.

## **Self-Employment Services Provided**

1) Training in developing a business plan, 2) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, and 3) free business consulting and low-cost training by Small Business Development Center advisors who provide aspiring and current small business owners a variety of services including: business plan development, manufacturing assistance, financial packaging and lending assistance, exporting and importing support, disaster recovery assistance, procurement and contracting aid, market research help, program support, and healthcare guidance



## Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides educational assistance to certain members of the reserve components who have been called to active duty for at least 90 days.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

To qualify for benefits participants must generally meet the following criteria:

1. Have served at least 90 consecutive days on active duty as a result of a call or order to active duty from a reserve component in response to a war or national emergency declared by the president or Congress.
2. Have a 6-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after June 30, 1985. Officers must have agreed to serve six years in addition to their original obligation. For some types of training, it is necessary to have a 6-year commitment that begins after September 30, 1990.
3. Have completed initial training for active duty.
4. Have received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before completing their initial active duty for training.
5. Remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit.
6. Must have been receiving benefits on, or during the term immediately preceding, November 24, 2015.<sup>28</sup>

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments),<sup>29</sup> 2) educational counseling, 3) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST)) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 4) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 5) tutoring fees, 6) postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 7) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 8) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 9) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (includes activities surrounding maintaining continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and re-examination fees,) 10) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), and 11) remedial or refresher coursework

<sup>28</sup>The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) will end on November 25, 2019. Individuals who established eligibility for REAP benefits but were not receiving benefits on, or during the term immediately preceding, November 24, 2015, may be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

<sup>29</sup>The Reserve Educational Assistance Program provides funding for optional educational and vocational counseling to eligible beneficiaries. 38 U.S.C. § 3697A.

### **Employment Services Provided**

1) Occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 2) on-the-job training, and 3) apprenticeship training (paid work component)

### **Self-Employment Services Provided**

None



## VA Work-study Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

The Work-study program offers an additional allowance to students in return for participation in VA-related activities. As a supplemental educational benefit, the VA work-study allowance can often serve as a special increment that makes a program of education or training feasible. In this way, work-study benefits may provide the educationally disadvantaged or unemployed student with an opportunity, the value of which can greatly exceed the actual monetary amount of the allowance itself.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans, spouses, and dependent children

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Beneficiaries must be eligible for VA education benefits and attend school three-quarter time or more.

### Education Services Provided

None

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



# The Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL)

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

## Program Description

Provides mental health support and healthcare to veterans to support their successful integration into college and university campuses. It meets this program objective through the following means:

- provides access to VA healthcare services, on-campus clinical counseling, and community education and training services;
- provides outreach, care coordination and clinical mental health services to student veterans on college and university campuses to support them in reaching their educational goals; and
- provides education and training to college and university faculty and staff to raise awareness of issues that might be affecting veterans on campus and to provide options for addressing those issues.<sup>30</sup>

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children<sup>31</sup>

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) referrals to additional services, 4) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs), and 5) clinical mental health counseling, outreach, facilitation of VHA enrollment, care coordination, training of faculty and staff

## Employment Services Provided

1) Referrals to additional services, and 2) job fairs

## Self-Employment Services Provided

None

<sup>30</sup>VITAL is not a grant to a college or university. It is part of the healthcare program provided to servicemembers and veterans but is only available in select locations.

<sup>31</sup>VITAL serves all servicemembers, veterans, and family members enrolled in a higher education institution. However, the level of service provided is based on the individual's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) eligibility and an assessment of his or her needs. For example, the program provides spouses and dependent children information, outreach, and care coordination and refers them to outside providers, such as campus or community providers, for clinical services. Similarly, the program provides servicemembers or veterans information, outreach, and care coordination, and refers them to Vet Centers or outside providers for clinical services.



## Vet Success on Campus

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides on-campus educational and vocational counseling (Chapter 36) and case management to veterans, spouses, and dependent children in college degree programs, with the aim of helping them complete their studies and find jobs. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, called VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) Counselors, are based at participating institutions.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Services may be accessed by:

- servicemembers and veterans eligible for any of VA's educational programs, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill;
- servicemembers and veterans attending training through VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program;
- eligible dependents of veterans who receive VA education benefits, including spouses who are attending school through the Post-9/11 GI Bill and eligible children; and
- servicemembers and veterans who attend the selected participating institutions while accessing other VA benefits.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) referrals to additional services, 5) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs), and 6) adjustment counseling and outreach for students on academic probation or at risk of dropping out.

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) resume assistance, 8) interview skills development, 9) referrals to additional services, 10) holding job fairs, and 11) special employer incentives (i.e. tax credits, wage off-sets, assistance with disability accommodations, etc.)

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None





# Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)

## Federal Administering Agency

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

## Program Description

Provides services to servicemembers and veterans with service-connected disabilities to help them prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment or achieve independence in daily living. Services may include education or training and a subsistence allowance.

This program provides individual comprehensive evaluations for program applicants to determine entitlement and the type of services that are the most appropriate. The five tracks of services provided are: reemployment, rapid access to employment, employment through long-term services, self-employment and independent-living assistance.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans  
Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

A servicemember may apply for VR&E services six months prior to discharge if he or she has a disability rating of at least 20 percent. Veterans with service-connected disability ratings of 10 percent or higher are eligible to apply. Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 20 percent or higher must be determined to have an employment handicap to be entitled to services. Veterans with service-connected disability ratings of 10 percent must be determined to have a serious employment handicap to be entitled. Under the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2008, servicemembers with a serious illness or injury may be automatically entitled to VR&E services. A memorandum rating, indicating that a service-connected disability rating of 20 percent or more is anticipated can be provided six months before servicemembers are discharged or within 12 months of when veterans separate from military service to allow them to apply for VR&E services.

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 5) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 6) other educational testing (e.g., GED, Praxis), 7) high school or GED completion, 8) tutoring fees, 9) books and materials allowance, 10) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 11) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 12) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 13) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 14) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal fees may be provided, if included in the rehabilitation plan, 15) subsistence allowance or housing allowance, 16) referrals to additional services, 17) assistive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education, 18) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), and 19) remedial or refresher coursework

## Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 8) on-the-job training, 9) apprenticeship training (paid work

component), 10) non-paid work experience, 11) resume assistance, 12) interview skills development, 13) assistive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, 14) subsistence allowance or housing allowance, 15) referrals to additional services, and 16) special employer incentives (i.e. wage off-sets, assistance with disability accommodations, etc.)

### **Self-Employment Services Provided**

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, 7) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 8) mentoring, 9) training in website development and social media, 10) assistance with feasibility analysis of the business concept and business plan, and 11) training to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.)



## Warrior Training Advancement Course

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Helps trainees begin processing claims from the first day they are hired at a VBA Regional Benefits Office. An entry level skill-bridge education and employment opportunity for Wounded Warriors and transitioning servicemembers to complete a national-level Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) training program while still on active duty. This training program is taught in-person only on military installations.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

This program is open to all active-duty Wounded Warrior and non-disabled transitioning servicemembers who will be on active-duty status the entire duration of the class, and who can start working for VA within 75 days of graduation.

### Education Services Provided

Supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) job development, 3) job readiness training, 4) job referrals, 5) job-search or job placement activities, 6) on-the-job training, 7) non-paid work experience, 8) resume assistance, 9) interview skills development, 10) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, and 11) referrals to additional services

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Warriors to Workforce Program

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

### Program Description

Provides training and on-the-job training assignments to veterans who have not completed a bachelor's degree to achieve Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Certification Levels I & II. Veterans are then integrated into VA and Other Government Agency (OGA) Acquisition Offices around the country to serve the federal government. This program hires veterans who have not completed a Bachelor's degree. It uses the Veterans' Recruitment Appointment to transition individuals to a professional career as contract specialists.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

The program seeks veterans who are eligible for hiring using the veterans' recruitment appointment and who have little to no higher education, have not completed their Bachelor's Degree, or do not have 24 business credits.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational counseling, 2) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits, 3) tutoring fees, 4) books and materials allowance, 5) tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 6) tuition for vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 7) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 8) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 9) living stipend or housing allowance, 10) referrals to additional services, 11) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support education, 12) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), 13) federal employment with benefits and professional development training, peak performance training, and leadership training, and 14) provision of a vocational rehabilitation counselor, academic counselor, and telehealth counselor

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 8) on-the-job training, 9) apprenticeship training (paid work component), 10) resume assistance, 11) interview skills development, 12) supportive technology for individuals with disabilities to support employment, 13) living stipend, 14) referrals to additional services, 15) coaching and mentoring to guide transition into the workforce, which may include academic tuition, subsistence allowance, and a vocational rehabilitation counselor through a partnership with the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Vets to Feds Career Development Program

### Federal Administering Agency

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers the program with assistance from the following federal agencies: the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, Health and Human Services, and Treasury; the National Regulatory Commission; and the Social Security Administration.

### Program Description

Provides career development opportunities for veterans, but also assists agencies in filling mission critical positions. Agencies identify key occupations to target veteran candidates and provide training to better enable veterans to meet agency staffing needs. In 2018, the program will target Veterans for Information Technology Cybersecurity positions.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: OPM responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

To be eligible for the 2018 Vets to Feds Career Development Program, individuals must be eligible for and qualify under the Veterans Recruitment Appointment or the Pathways Recent Graduate Program at the General Schedule 7, 9, or 11 grade levels.

### Education Services Provided

Training and educational assistance tailored to individual need.

### Employment Services Provided

1) Job development, 2) on-the-job training, and 3) mentoring

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None



## Boots to Business Reboot

### Federal Administering Agency

Small Business Administration (SBA)

### Program Description

Provides 2-day Boots to Business curriculum—which is offered to transitioning and retiring servicemembers and their spouses on installations as part of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)—in off-installation locations within communities. This extends access to veterans of all eras, National Guard and reserve members, and military spouses. During the class, participants are introduced to the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to launch a business.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children<sup>32</sup>

Source: SBA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

The Boots to Business Reboot program is open to veterans of all eras, National Guard and Reserve members, and their military spouses and caregivers.

### Education Services Provided

Referrals to additional services

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-employment Services Provided

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, 7) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 8) training to conduct feasibility analysis and customer research, 9) training to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.), and 10) training on commercial supply chain opportunities

<sup>32</sup>Dependent children are allowed to participate in the program on a space-available basis, according to agency officials.



# Service-Disabled Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program

## Federal Administering Agency

Small Business Administration (SBA)

## Program Description

Provides grants to eligible organizations and institutions of higher learning may apply to SBA. Grant funds are used to market and deliver existing service-disabled veteran entrepreneurial training programs to veterans, service-disabled veterans, and reserve component members who intend to start new businesses or expand or diversify existing small businesses.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: SBA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

To be eligible for this funding opportunity, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a non-profit organization, local or state agency or an institution of higher learning.
2. Demonstrate a history of providing quality entrepreneurship or business management training to aspiring or existing veterans, service-disabled veteran small business owners and reserve component members that results in new business starts, business expansions or diversifications, as well as jobs created and/or retained.

Eligible organizations and institutions of higher learning may submit only one proposal.

## Education Services Provided

1) Case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 2) referrals to additional services, and 3) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs)

## Employment Services Provided

Referrals to additional services

## Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, 7) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 8) mentoring, 9) training in website development and social media, 10) training to conduct feasibility analysis and customer research, 11) training to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.), and 12) training on commercial supply chain opportunities





# Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program

## Federal Administering Agency

Small Business Administration  
(SBA)

## Program Description

Provides grants to deliver and scale existing veteran federal procurement entrepreneurial training programs to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses that intend to pursue, or are already engaged in, federal procurement.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans  
Source: SBA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

This funding opportunity is open to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses applicants from all U.S. states and territories that meet the following criteria:

- be a non-profit organization or private sector firm;
- demonstrate a history of providing quality entrepreneurship or business management training for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses that intend to pursue, or are already engaged in, federal procurement. The quality of a program can be demonstrated by new business expansions or diversifications, jobs created or retained, increases in revenue, federal contracts obtained, and connections to other resources such as SBA resource partners; and
- provide metrics from their existing program that demonstrate participant outcomes such as new business expansions or diversifications, jobs created or retained, revenue increases, and federal contracts obtained.

## Education Services Provided

None

## Employment Services Provided

None

## Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, 7) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 8) mentoring, 9) training in website development and social media, 10) training to conduct feasibility analysis and customer research, 11) training to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.), and 12) training on commercial supply chain opportunities





## Veterans Business Outreach Center

### Federal Administering Agency

Small Business Administration (SBA)

### Program Description

Provides entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling and resource partner referrals to transitioning servicemembers, veterans, National Guard and reserve members and military spouses interested in starting or growing a small business. The SBA has 22 organizations participating in this cooperative agreement that serve as Veterans Business Outreach Centers.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children  
Source: SBA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

To be eligible for this funding opportunity an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be a nonprofit organization, local or state agency, private sector firm, or institute of higher learning;
- Demonstrate a history of providing quality entrepreneurship or business management training to aspiring entrepreneurs or existing small business owners that are members of the following populations: veterans, service-disabled veterans, reserve component members or members of the National Guard, transitioning servicemembers, spouses of servicemembers or veterans, and other beneficiaries interested in starting or growing a small enterprise.<sup>33</sup>

### Education Services Provided

None

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, 7) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 8) mentoring, 9) training in website development and social media, 10) training to conduct feasibility analysis and customer research, 11) training to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.), 12) training on commercial supply chain opportunities, and 13) lead grantee in regard to delivery of the Boots to Business Program

<sup>33</sup>The quality of a program can be demonstrated by new business starts, business expansions or diversifications, number of contracts awarded and loans approved, as well as jobs created and/or retained, and connection to other programs such as SBA resource partners.



# Women Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program

## Federal Administering Agency

Small Business Administration (SBA)

## Program Description

Provides entrepreneurship training to women veterans, women servicemembers, women who are the spouses of servicemembers, and women veterans who are interested in starting, growing and diversifying new and established small businesses.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Women servicemembers, women veterans, servicemembers' or veterans' spouses who are women

Source: SBA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

To be eligible for this funding opportunity an applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a nonprofit organization, local or state agency, private sector firm, or an institution of higher learning.
2. Demonstrate a history of providing quality entrepreneurship or business management training for women who are aspiring or existing small business owners and members of one the following populations: veterans, service-disabled veterans, members of the National Guard or reserve component, active-duty servicemembers, or women spouses of servicemembers or veterans. The quality of a program can be demonstrated by new business starts, business expansions or diversifications, as well as jobs created or retained and connection to other resources such as SBA resource partners.

## Education Services Provided

None

## Employment Services Provided

None

## Self-Employment Services Provided

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, 7) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners,) 8) mentoring, 9) training in website development and social media, 10) training in how to conduct feasibility analysis and customer research, 11) training in how to select a business structure (sole proprietor, LLC, corporation, etc.), and 12) training on commercial supply chain opportunities



# All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance (or Montgomery GI Bill)—Selected Reserve

## Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the program in conjunction with the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security.

## Program Description

Provides educational benefits to active-duty reservists and veterans. Benefits may be used for college degree programs, vocational and technical courses, and other education and training.

## Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans

Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

## Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

To meet basic eligibility criteria a person must meet the following requirements:

1. Term of service:
  - For enlisted personnel: enlisted, reenlisted, or extended an enlistment in the Selected Reserve after June 30, 1985, so that the reservist has an obligation to serve for a period of not less than six years from the enlistment date.
  - For officers: agreed to serve in the Selected Reserve for a period of not less than six years after June 30, 1985, in addition to any other period of obligated Selected Reserve service.
2. Earned a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate) before applying for VA benefits.
3. Completed Individual Advanced Training.
4. Did not elect to have his or her service in the Selected Reserve credited toward establishing eligibility under Chapter 30, U.S Code Title 38.

## Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments),<sup>34</sup> 2) educational counseling, 3) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 4) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 5) tutoring fees, 6) postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), 7) vocational or technical education courses (includes courses taken as part of a non-college degree program and non-degree or technical courses offered at community colleges), 8) certification and licensure attainment fees (e.g., fees paid to the certification agency application and exam fees), 9) certification and licensure maintenance and renewal costs (includes activities surrounding maintaining continuing education units, annual maintenance fees, recertification fees, and reexamination fees,) 10) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), and 11) remedial or refresher coursework

## Employment Services Provided

1) On-the-job training and 2) apprenticeship training (paid work component)

<sup>34</sup>The Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve provides funding for educational needs assessments and educational counseling in addition to the payment of benefits. 38 U.S.C. § 3697A.

## **Self-Employment Services Provided**

1) Training in developing a business plan, 2) training on federal contracting opportunities and certification programs, and 3) free business consulting and low-cost training services provided by Small Business Development Center advisors including: business plan development, manufacturing assistance, financial packaging and lending assistance, exporting and importing support, disaster recovery assistance, procurement and contracting aid, market research help, business development program support, and healthcare guidance



## Coast Guard Transition Assistance Program (Coast Guard TAP)<sup>35</sup>

### Agency

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Coast Guard administers the program in partnership with the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs; the Small Business Administration; and other partnering agencies through a Memorandum of Understanding.

### Program Description

Prepares servicemembers separating or retiring from the Coast Guard for their transition to civilian life. All eligible servicemembers are required to complete the standardized components of TAP. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Veterans and spouses

Source: DHS responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary Eligibility

Coast Guard servicemembers who have served 180 days of continuous active-duty service are generally required to participate in this program before they separate or retire. Coast Guard commands must allow separating servicemembers to begin TAP at least 90 days before they are discharged, retire, or are otherwise released from active duty.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) educational counseling, 3) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 4) tests for academic credit (e.g., Global General Service Test (GSST) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), 5) entrance tests (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, ACT, GMAT), 6) referrals to additional services, 7) college fairs (including "industry days" that combine both college and job fairs), and 8) DOD provides transitioning servicemembers with on-line assessments for higher education through the DOD Joint Knowledge Online website or in-person at applicable DOD installations.

### Employment Services Provided

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job-search or job placement activities, 4) resume assistance, 5) interview skills development, 6) housing allowance, 7) referrals to additional services, 8) job fairs, and 9) DOL is responsible for administering the TAP employment workshop. DOD provides career exploration and planning through the DOD Joint Knowledge Online website or in-person at applicable DOD installations.

### Self-Employment Services Provided

The Coast Guard does not directly provide self-employment services as part of TAP. Some servicemembers may choose to attend an optional 2-day entrepreneurship "Boots to Business" class as part of the program. However, as noted in GAO-18-135, the Coast Guard relies on online

<sup>35</sup>DOL officials said that TAP is an interagency program administered by several agencies, including DOD, VA, DOL, SBA, OPM, Education, and DHS-Coast Guard and that the portion of TAP administered by DOD is not generally considered a separate program than the portion administered by DHS-Coast Guard. GAO has previously reported that both DOD and DHS-Coast Guard participate in the TAP interagency governance structure that oversees the TAP curriculum and performance measures. However, for the purposes of this report we list DOD TAP and Coast Guard TAP as separate programs because DOD administers TAP for the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy and DHS-Coast Guard administers TAP for the Coast Guard. Moreover, while DOD has promulgated regulations and developed issuances which require that servicemembers complete the component parts of the TAP program, Coast Guard has not promulgated any regulations to implement TAP. GAO has previously reported separately on DOD TAP and Coast Guard TAP. See GAO-18-23 and GAO-18-135.

delivery of TAP information—including 2-day classes such as the entrepreneurship class—because it lacks the resources for them to attend in person. Coast Guard servicemembers may attend the course at a DOD facility if space is available or online if in-person attendance is not feasible. Travel funds are generally not available. DOD provides entrepreneurship information through the DOD Joint Knowledge Online website or in person at applicable DOD installations.



## DOD Transition Assistance Program (DOD TAP)<sup>36</sup>

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Defense (DOD) administers the program in conjunction with the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA), Labor, Homeland Security, and Education; the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management.

### Program Description

Provides departing servicemembers with a number of services to help them transition to civilian life. Such services include employment assistance and information on VA benefits.<sup>37</sup>

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers, veterans, spouses, and dependent children<sup>38</sup>

Source: DOD responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Military members who have served 180 days of continuous active-duty service on Title 10 orders are generally required to participate in this program before they separate or retire from military service. Servicemembers with anticipated separation dates are expected to begin as soon as possible during the 12-month period preceding that date, but not later than 90 days before separation. Similarly, those with anticipated retirement dates are expected to begin TAP as soon as possible during the 24-month period preceding that date, but not later than 90 days before retirement. Servicemembers with unanticipated separations—those who learn they will leave the military in less than 90 days—are expected to begin TAP as soon as possible. With regard to completing the program, servicemembers are generally expected to complete the entire TAP process no later than 90 days before their anticipated date of separation or retirement. TAP-eligible members of the National Guard and Reserve who are being demobilized or deactivated from active duty under circumstances in which operational requirements make the 90-day requirement unfeasible must begin TAP as soon as possible within the remaining period of service while on active duty.

### Education Services Provided

1) Educational needs assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 2) case-management (e.g., designated staff member assigned to provide hands-on support to help participant manage benefits), 3) certification and licensure preparation (e.g., college and community college courses and degrees if required, study materials, or non-college degree training), 4) referrals to additional services, 5) apprenticeship instruction (classroom learning or other direct instruction provided as part of an apprenticeship), 6) remedial or refresher coursework, 7) additional program services include additional 2-day classes including: Accessing Higher Education, Career Exploration and

<sup>36</sup>DOL officials said that TAP is an interagency program administered by several agencies, including DOD, VA, DOL, SBA, OPM, Education, and DHS-Coast Guard and that the portion of TAP administered by DOD is not generally considered a separate program than the portion administered by DHS-Coast Guard. GAO has previously reported that both DOD and DHS-Coast Guard participate in the TAP interagency governance structure that oversees the TAP curriculum and performance measures. However, for the purposes of this report we list DOD TAP and Coast Guard TAP as separate programs because DOD administers TAP for the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy and DHS-Coast Guard administers TAP for the Coast Guard. Moreover, while DOD has promulgated regulations and developed issuances which require that servicemembers complete the component parts of the TAP program, Coast Guard has not promulgated any regulations to implement TAP. GAO has previously reported separately on DOD TAP and Coast Guard TAP. See GAO-18-23 and GAO-18-135.

<sup>37</sup>For more information on the DOD TAP program, see GAO-18-23. For information on the Coast Guard TAP program, see GAO-18-135.

<sup>38</sup>Dependent children can attend the additional 2-day Accessing Higher Education class with their servicemember parent if space is available, according to agency officials.

Planning, and the Boots to Business Entrepreneurship class.<sup>39</sup> Special curricula have been developed that is geared to wounded, ill and injured servicemembers, and 8) DOD provides transitioning servicemembers with an assessment for higher education

### **Employment Services Provided**

1) Employment counseling, 2) employment assessment (e.g., aptitude, interest, personality, or values assessments), 3) job development, 4) job readiness training, 5) job referrals, 6) job-search or job placement activities, 7) occupational or vocational training (taken outside of a degree program), 8) resume assistance, 9) interview skills development, 10) referrals to additional services, 11) information and referral from TAP to the DoD Skillbridge program that also provides on-the-job training, apprenticeship, and non-paid work experience to eligible servicemembers, and 12) DOL is responsible for administering the TAP employment workshop, which includes a discussion on career exploration and planning and the Career Exploration and Planning Track, an optional course of the Transition Assistance Program

### **Self-Employment Services Provided**

1) Training in business fundamentals, 2) training in evaluating business concepts, 3) training in developing a business plan, 4) training on accessing capital, 5) training on revenue readiness, 6) referrals to additional resources (e.g., Veterans Business Outreach Centers or SBA resource partners), 7) mentoring, 8) training in website development and social media, 9) training to select a business structure (Sole proprietor, LLC, Corporation, etc.), and 10) SBA provides transitioning servicemembers information on entrepreneurship

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<sup>39</sup>This 2-day class was previously known as the Career Technical Training Track (CTTT).





## Tuition Assistance Top Up

### Federal Administering Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the program in conjunction with the Department of Defense (DOD)

### Program Description

Provides education benefits to active-duty servicemembers.

### Type of Beneficiary Served

Servicemembers and veterans  
Source: VA responses to GAO survey. GAO did not independently verify this information.

### Beneficiary or Grantee Eligibility

Claimants receiving Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty benefits or claimants using their Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits.<sup>40, 41</sup> National Guard or Reserve members are also eligible to use Tuition Assistance Top Up benefits under certain circumstances.<sup>42</sup>

### Education Services Provided

1) Tuition for postsecondary courses as part of a degree or certificate program (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program), and 2) tuition for vocational or technical courses offered in community colleges for college credit<sup>43</sup>

### Employment Services Provided

None

### Self-Employment Services Provided

None

<sup>40</sup>These benefits are referred to as “Chapter 30” benefits.

<sup>41</sup>Servicemembers may use tuition assistance in combination with Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. However, the amount of tuition assistance is subtracted from the amount of tuition and fees reported by the school. Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits would then be applied to any remaining tuition and fee charges.

<sup>42</sup>DOD sets the criteria and administers the Tuition Assistance Top Up program for National Guard and Reserve members. DOD pays the applicable portion of tuition and fees and then VA serves as the final payer.

<sup>43</sup>Tuition Assistance Top Up does not reimburse beneficiaries for certification or licensure preparation.

### Enclosure III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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