

Veteran Employment Program Impact Study

A Study Overview of Four National Veteran Employment Programs

Overview of the Study

This brief summarizes a study conducted by the [Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State](#) to examine whether four major national nonprofit veteran employment programs include the types of services and delivery approaches that research has shown to improve veterans' employment outcomes. The study focused on four programs, [Hire Heroes USA](#) (HHUSA), [Hiring Our Heroes](#) (HOH), [Onward to Opportunity](#) (O2O), and [VetJobs](#), that collectively represent a large share of the nonprofit employment support available to transitioning service members and veterans.

The study builds on evidence from [The Veterans Metrics Initiative \(TVMI\)](#), a national longitudinal study designed to examine veterans' well-being during the military-to-civilian transition and identify program components associated with stronger outcomes across areas such as employment, finances, health, and social relationships. TVMI followed a cohort of 9,566 veterans after military separation and provided a unique evidence base for identifying which employment-related supports were linked with outcomes such as [job attainment](#) and [career advancement](#).

Programs Included in the Review

The four programs assessed for this study provide a broad set of employment supports for transitioning service members, veterans, and, in some cases, military spouses. Together, they serve an estimated 170,000 veterans and transitioning service members annually. Their services include career coaching, resume development, interview preparation, military-to-civilian skill translation, job search assistance, credentialing and training, fellowships, networking events, and direct connections to employers.

Although the programs share many common features, they differ in their points of intervention, service intensity, target populations, and primary strategies for connecting veterans to employment opportunities. These differences allow the programs to function as complementary parts of a broader veteran employment ecosystem rather than as interchangeable services.

Study Design and Methods

The study used two related analytic approaches. First, researchers reviewed each program's services to determine whether they included content and process components previously identified through TVMI as being associated with improved employment outcomes. Content components describe what is provided to participants, such as resume writing, interviewing support, job search tools, or career planning. Process components describe how services are delivered, such as mentoring or coaching, direct instruction, practice-based learning, interactive online tools, professional networking, or self-directed online materials.

Second, researchers conducted impact analyses using program participant data and comparison data from TVMI. The analytic sample included approximately 15,200 participants across the four programs. Where sufficient data were available, program participants were compared with similar veterans in the TVMI sample on outcomes including full-time job attainment, starting salary, job retention, job promotion, and movement to better employment opportunities. Matching and eligibility criteria varied by program and outcome based on the available data.

What the Study Found

The study found that all four programs incorporate evidence-informed content and process components associated with stronger employment outcomes. Commonly offered services, particularly interviewing and resume-writing support delivered through mentoring or coaching, were consistently linked to improved employment outcomes in TVMI. Veterans had higher odds of full-time employment when they received interviewing support or resume-writing assistance through a mentor or coach. In addition, resume-writing supports, regardless of how they were delivered, were also associated with movement into better employment opportunities.

Impact evaluation findings also demonstrated that participants in the evaluated programs experienced meaningful employment advantages compared with similar veterans in the TVMI sample. Across the four programs, participants entered the civilian workforce with significantly higher starting salaries, earning approximately \$12,833 to \$48,124 more than comparable veterans. In two programs, participants were substantially more likely (2 to 9.6 times) to secure full-time employment within the first 15 months after military separation and program engagement. Evidence also suggests that components such as direct instruction, interactive job boards, networking activities, job training, and resume-writing supports are associated with job promotion, career mobility, and movement into better employment opportunities.

Implications for Policy and Practice

These findings suggest that investments in veteran employment programs are most likely to produce measurable returns when they prioritize services with demonstrated links to job attainment, earnings, and career advancement. Federal agencies, funders, and implementation partners can use this evidence to strengthen grant requirements, guide program improvement, support scaling of effective components, and encourage continued evaluation of employment supports. More broadly, the findings point to the value of a coordinated veteran employment ecosystem that offers evidence-informed services at multiple points in the military-to-civilian transition.

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For additional information about this study, please contact the VETERANetwork team at VETERANetwork@psu.edu.