

NATIONAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION COMMISSION

TOPIC 1: ECONOMY

RED-HOT U.S. ECONOMY DRIVES GLOBAL INFLATION, FORCING FOREIGN BANKS TO ACT

Central banks are raising rates to fend off a rise in inflation as policy makers respond to the booming U.S. economy.



Russian Central Bank Gov. Elvira Nabiullina presented the bank's annual report to the Russian parliament on Tuesday.

(Photo: Sergei Fadeichev/Zuma Press)

A booming U.S. economy that is driving inflation higher around the world and pushing up the U.S. dollar is pressing some central banks to increase interest rates, despite still-high levels of Covid-19 infections and incomplete economic recoveries in their own countries.

The world's central banks are hanging on how the U.S. Federal Reserve will respond to a rise in inflation, wary of being caught in the crosscurrents of an extraordinary U.S. economic expansion. Global stock markets fell on Thursday after Fed officials signaled, they expect to raise interest rates by late 2023, sooner than they anticipated in March, as the U.S. economy heats up.

A global march toward higher interest rates, with the Fed at the center, risks stifling the economic recovery in some places, especially at a time when emerging-market debt has risen.

The size of the U.S. economy, accounting for almost a quarter of world gross domestic product, and the importance of its financial markets have long exerted an outsize pull on global policy-making. But unusually brisk U.S. growth this year is critical to a world economy still recovering from last year's shocks. Fed officials expect the U.S. economy to grow 7% this year, according to projections released Wednesday.

Central banks in Russia, Brazil and Turkey have raised interest rates in recent weeks, in part to tamp down inflation stemming from the surge in commodities prices this year. As factories around the world strain to satisfy U.S. demand, commodities' prices ranging from tin to copper have soared.

"With all the consequences of the pandemic, the last thing these countries need now is policy tightening," said Tamara Basic Vasiljev, an economist with Oxford Economics in London.

A U.S. economic boom supports economies around the world by boosting U.S. imports and remittances. But it also drives up borrowing costs and inflation and strengthens the dollar, which tightens global financial conditions and acts as a restraint on the recovery.

The pain is felt unevenly. A stronger dollar hurts emerging-market economies that have borrowed in dollars, while helping larger exporters in Europe and East Asia whose products become more competitive relative to U.S. exports.

In advanced economies, central bankers mostly believe that the period of rising inflation will prove temporary unless consumers come to expect it to continue and demand higher wages.

While central banks don't see that happening soon, some economists think they may be surprised.

"I think there is a high chance that this temporary shock to prices could become more enduring," said Luigi Speranza, chief global economist at BNP Paribas. Mr. Speranza noted that inflation in Germany is likely to be around 4% when the next round of pay bargaining starts toward the end of this year.

Central banks in Europe and Japan need to match the Fed's dovishness or risk a spike in their currencies that could undermine economic recovery, economists said. The delicate dance around the Fed could come undone if inflation proves more persistent than expected, which would likely trigger a chain reaction of interest-rate increases.

"To prevent the euro strengthening the [European Central Bank] would need to be similarly dovish as the Federal Reserve, which might be a struggle due to different inflation and growth dynamics," said Elga Bartsch, head of macro research at BlackRock.

Emerging-market economies often don't have the luxury of waiting, however. Even a short burst of inflation can weigh heavily on their currencies and hurt companies' and households' ability to service debt that is often denominated in dollars or euros.

The Fed has signaled that it will take care to avoid a repeat of the 2013 "taper tantrum," in which central banks in developing countries were forced to respond to a sudden withdrawal of foreign investment after the U.S. central bank surprised investors by saying it was considering a reduction in its stimulus programs.

“So our intention for this process is that it will be orderly, methodical, and transparent,” Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said Wednesday. “And I can just tell you, we see real value in communicating well in advance what our thinking is. And we’ll try to be clear.”

But with global inflation accelerating and the Fed starting to shift course, the calculus for some central banks is changing.

Brazil’s central bank unveiled a third consecutive 0.75 percentage point interest rate increase on Wednesday and signaled possible larger increases ahead, as it wrestles with inflation above 8%.

The Bank of Russia has raised its benchmark rate three times this year to 5.5%, after inflation accelerated to over 6% this month, its highest level in almost five years. On Tuesday, Gov. Elvira Nabiullina said that Russia will continue raising interest rates and doesn’t expect this to hinder economic growth.

“We have kept rates low for quite some time to make sure we don’t clip the wings of a recovering economy,” Ms. Nabiullina said in a speech at Russia’s lower house of parliament. “Now is the time to raise rates in response to changed circumstances and rising inflation.”

Turkey’s central bank sharply increased its main interest rate to 19% in March to counter double-digit inflation and a depreciating lira. But the Turkish lira has again come under pressure in recent weeks as investors try to assess whether the central bank will heed the demands of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to cut rates.

Recent price increases on fresh produce have raised the so-called borscht set—the vegetables needed for Russia’s beloved soup—which is a bellwether indicator for many Russians. Since the start of the year, the price of potatoes, cabbage and carrots have risen by 60% to 80%.

In poor countries, a larger share of spending usually goes to essentials such as food and energy, so policy makers are quicker to tamp down on inflation when those prices rise.

Central banks in Scandinavia and South Korea have signaled plans to tighten monetary policy to restrain possible asset bubbles, particularly in property. Norway’s central bank signaled Thursday that it will increase interest rates in September.

Central banks in central Europe, and including Hungary and the Czech Republic, are also expected to lift rates soon. They didn’t suffer contractions on the same scale as larger European countries such as France and Spain during the pandemic but are seeing inflation rise.

Iain Stealey, chief investment officer of fixed income at JP Morgan Asset Management, said the Fed will likely manage to avoid a repeat of the “taper tantrum.”

“It is a very long, slow process...it’s very difficult not to do this given upside surprises in inflation,” Mr. Stealey said.

Still, there are problems with the patient approach, economists said.

“This idea of letting inflation run hot...means that you’re only going to realize you have an inflation problem when you already have an inflation problem,” said Klaus Baader, chief global economist at Société Générale.

HOUSEHOLD DATA

Table A-5. Employment status of the civilian population 18 years and over by veteran status, period of service, and sex, not seasonally adjusted

[Numbers in thousands]

Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	May 2020	May 2021	May 2020	May 2021	May 2020	May 2021
Unemployed	800	379	716	314	84	65
Unemployment rate	9.0	4.1	9.1	3.9	7.8	5.5

The national unemployment rate is 6.1 percent (May 2021). Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is 4.0 percent. Currently, Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is 6.9 percent.

In April 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was **5.3%**. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was **6.0%** in April.

TOPIC 2: VIRTUAL MEETINGS & CONFERENCE CALLS

On Monday, June 14, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the Council for College and Military Educators meetings on the Hill. The annual symposium facilitates the networking and interaction of the key leadership across these organizations in an environment that is focused on enhancing and optimizing voluntary education opportunities for the service member and their families.

On Monday, June 14, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with George W. Bush Military Task Force Leaders to discuss future initiatives.; Also, conversations for publishing policy briefs and how to engage with higher education and government leaders were held.

On Monday, June 14, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division visited the opening of the National Museum of the U.S. Army which celebrated over 245 years of army history and honoring the regular army, the army reserve and the army national guard.

On Monday, June 14, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had a conversation with Project Coordinator reference Risk Based Survey pilot wrap up and evaluation.

On Tuesday, June 15, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the USGLC Global Impact Forum. The forum centered about America's Global Impact and what America's next steps should be in helping themselves and the world battling the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination and medical concerns, economic disparity, and climate change. Panelist touch topics on:

- **Next steps America should take for their global response so a pandemic like this never happens again.**

- The supplies Americans demand need to be made here in the country or over in allied countries, so we do not have a shortage again and we can get supplies quicker and more effectively.
- Economic/ Unemployment rates are at an all-time low and that's why promoting Global Market places are key to success for America's economy. Using the global market can help small businesses and make more jobs available.
- **Why should we advance our alliances with other countries vs. China to better our relationships overseas?**
 - Rep. Michael Waltz states that China's economy is bigger than ours so America needs to rely on other countries to help us out. Establishing better relationships with them is key to America's success. For example, ties with India has helped America by having access to their market; however, a tremendous amount of growth can happen with India, as well as starting ties with Australia, Korean, and Asia.
 - Rep. Darin LaHood talks about the strong competition coming from China and Russia. He mentions the United States- Mexico-Canada Agreement, that was passed under the Trump Administration, that helps free and fair trade between the three countries to help them grow and prosper. He was one of the leaders who observed the agreement. He uses this to promote the idea that we can pass a bill that will help America recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and create a rule based system for everyone in order to move forward.
 - He also mentions that The World Trade Organization needs to be reformed and looked at in order for them to update their policies. America needs to create a competitive system in order to combat other countries; the problem being China as of now. He believes looking into future companies for trade agreements internationally and nationally will be good. He ends his speech with how America should be working with agencies and non-governmental agencies to be able to spread a new hope of the American Dream throughout America once again.
- **Two mayors of great cities who have understood how to lead globally and how working globally can help America exponentially.**
 - Mayor Christina Muryn was asked mostly about the economy and small business organizations. She believed that being able to find common groups, building relationships and trust, and having tough conversations is very beneficial to establishing relationships. Ohio is known for their economic development and multiple multi-million dollar companies, so they have learned that local economy prospers from people working there and from international affairs with foreign countries. Helping understand the connection America has around the world and how it impacts our local communities is something that needs to be taught as well as improved upon. Strong small businesses are being impacted as they receive supplies from outside countries as well as developing support from inside the country.

On Tuesday, June 15, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division connected and had conversations with Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the importance of education; Boris Kun on potential endorsement of Risk Based Surveys by DOD, and Bush Education Task Force Panel with Director Amy Bernard, Warrior Scholar CEO Ryan Pavel and Bush Institute contractor Rebecca Burgess.

On Tuesday, June 15, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division presented on the Risk Based Survey project and gave an overview of where we were in the plans for national

rollout of the new oversight model. Very well received and the Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) may endorse.

On Tuesday, June 15, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division discussed Risk-Based Survey Model (RBS) with DOD Vol Ed political staff and had conversations with Dawn Bilodeau of DOD and Keith Hauk of University of Maryland Global Campus on Risk based surveys and national challenges for institutional oversight, including insuring quality in on line learning.

On Tuesday, June 15, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Veterans Education Project CEO on future initiatives and also concerns about a Florida School; Also, met with Staffers from both the HVAC And SVAC to discuss 90/10 and Risk Based Surveys.

On Tuesday, June 15, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Veterans Affairs and SDVOSBs. This meeting focus was to express the concerns of SDVOSBs associated with the VA acquisition program migration to DLA's MSPV program. DOD and DLA are not required to comply with VETS First. This will cause VA to have the ability to not comply with VETS First also therefore SDVOSBs will be denied future contracts with the VA. Andrew Centineo discussed how SDVOSBs will be included in the search for contracts but the updates to the systems have not gone into action. Some issues discussed were:

- **Department of Defense acquisition program**
 - The Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support (DMLSS)
- **Defense Logistics Administration**
 - Prime Vendor Web Order
- **SDVOSB Concerns**
 - DLA will not adopt VETS First
 - DOD will not adopt VETS First
 - Loss of potential revenue to the SDVOSB community
- **VA's current acquisition program**
 - Med/Surg Prime Vender (MSPV 2.0)

On Wednesday, June 16, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended meetings with House and Senate staffers on pending legislation; House still have plans for a round table on educational oversight and the Risk Based Survey model.

On Thursday, June 17, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with HVAC staff; Also, had conversations with the Bush Institute Staff on policy recommendations and report to the Full Task Force.

On Thursday, June 17, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Department of the Army Deputy to the Garrison Commander, John Moeller, and Director of HR, Kevin Rennick to discuss the operation of the Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) at Fort Belvoir. Analyzed how the program works for those veterans that want to pursue technical jobs; Overall, the TAP program has been vastly improved. Also. Fort Belvoir manages several job fairs throughout the year, they went virtually during COVID-19. The Department of the Army would like The American Legion to be involved by providing services to their active-duty service members.

On Thursday, June 17, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the CCME Annual Symposium 2021 Bridging the Gaps. The meeting provided veteran and military affiliated students' perspectives on the current state of higher education and the resources they found lacking. The overall themes centered on the need for more information related to higher education, career exploration, and resources while still on active duty. Some issues discussed were:

- **Community resources that would help with** housing, technology, food, and basic needs costs.
- **Resources that would help cover school specific fees** such as library and parking.
- **Career exploration and discovery throughout period of service** as career coaching, emphasizing education that leads to employment.
- **Military spouses have difficulty finding employment** due to sponsors', military status, and tendency to relocate every few years.

On Thursday, June 17, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended the SBA Educational Webinar Series South Central Region. The webinar provided an informational presentation on the resources that are available for small business owners within the South Central Region. Topics such as loans, grants, and other programs were discussed in detailed along with the qualifications for these programs. Cedric Richmond gave remarks centered around the Covid-19 pandemic and the Renee Johnson discussed ways in which small business owners can do their part to guarantee safety for employees and clients. A few items considered were:

- **SBA Funding Programs** for loans (Paycheck Protection Plan, EIDL, 504, etc.), grants (Restaurant Revitalization Fund, Support for Shuttered Venue Operators, etc.)
- **Opportunities to Expand with Federal Contracting** for Women Owned Small Business, Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business, and Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) Program.
- **Community Navigator Pilot Program**
- **Employee Retention Tax Credit/Paid Leave Tax Credit**

On Friday, June 18, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division had conversations with Hill Staffers on plans for new legislation and congressional action for this month.

On Friday, June 18, the National Veterans Employment and Education Division conducted an analysis on the Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act for the purpose of drafting testimony; Also, drafting of a policy white paper on veteran homelessness.

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

ACE: American Council on Education

ACP: American Corporate Partners, a veteran's support organization

ATLAS: Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative

BLS: Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics

C&P: V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam

CAVC: Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

CCME: Council of College and Military Educators

COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

CSAAVE: California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education

DIMO: Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations

DOD: Department of Defense

DOL-VETS: Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services

EdCounsel: Higher education consulting firm

EIDL program. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans
EIDL: Economic Injury Disaster Loan
GAO: Government Accountability Office
GPD: V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans
GWB: George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group
HEROES ACT of 2003: Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency.
HVAC: House Veterans Affairs Committee
MCAI: American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative
MSLP: The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program
MSO: Military Support Organization
NAICU: National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
NASAA: National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
NAVPA: National Association of Veterans Program Administrators
NCA: V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration
NDAA: National Defense Authorization Act
NLD: American Legion's National Legislative Division
OPM: Office of Personnel Management
PPP: Paycheck Protection Program
RBS: Risk-Based Survey Model
RPIC: Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge
S2S: Service to School, a veteran's organization
SAA: State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
SBA: Small Business Administration
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical
SVA: Student Veterans of America, a veteran's organization
SVAC Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
TAPS: Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families
TEAM Act: Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits
TFA: American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
USDA: United States Department of Agriculture
USERRA: Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
VA&R: American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division
VACO: Veterans Affairs Central Office
VBA: V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration
VE&E: Veterans Employment and Education Division
VES: Veterans Education Success, a veteran's organization
VSO: Veterans Service Organization

TOPIC 3a: TRACKING LEGISLATION

Recognizing Military Service in Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Act: Would allow service members who pause their student loan payments while deployed or on extended active duty orders to count that period of time toward their PSLF progress – which is currently not allowed.

Status: Expected to be introduced within a month

H.R.1836 - Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act of 2021: Would expand eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill to count every day that a servicemember is paid and in uniform toward benefit eligibility in order to achieve GI Bill parity for National Guard and Reserve members.

Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act: Would improve veterans' access to information about higher education and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore benefits that veterans use at schools subject to civil enforcement.

GI Bill Repair Act of 2020: To extend to black veterans of World War II, their surviving spouses, and direct descendants' eligibility for specific housing and educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

[Resolution No.: None on file](#)

Status: Currently on hold, has not been introduced

Homeless Veteran Coronavirus Response Act: The bill allows V.A. to use existing funds for a broader range of services; authorizes the Department to collaborate with outside organizations to facilitate shelters on its properties; loosens restrictions on Grant and Per Diem (GPD) payments and requires V.A. to ensure veterans participating in V.A. homeless programs have access to V.A. telehealth services.

[Resolution No. 326: Support Funding for Additional Housing for Homeless Veterans with Families](#)

H.R.492: To amend title 38, United States Code, make permanent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs's authority to provide financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

[Resolution No. 340: Support Permanent Authorization for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Program](#)

HR 1615: The American Legion supports legislation that would streamline and improve the verification process for veteran-owned small businesses and veteran-owned small businesses.

Status: Passed House Vote, received in the Senate, and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs. It did not pass by the end of the 116th Session, will need to be reintroduced.

HR 2224: To direct the Secretary of Labor to prioritize services to homeless veterans with dependent children in carrying out homeless veterans' reintegration programs and for other purposes.

Status: Did not pass by the end of the 116th Session.

HR 1196, Jobs for Veterans Act of 2019: This bill allows an increased work opportunity tax credit for employers who hire veterans who have been certified as discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and who begin working for the employer after December 31, 2019, and before January 1, 2024. This increased credit is in addition to any work opportunity tax credit allowed to a veteran with a service-connected disability.

[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

HR 7010, Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020: This bill significantly changes the PPP loans' terms to be more advantageous to small businesses. Including more flexibility in applying the loan to other expenses besides payroll and benefits and extending the time frame for expending the loan.

Status: Became Public Law No: 116-142.

HR 4625: To require education programs to be approved by the V.A. to abide by the Principles of Excellence to include a ban on deceptive or misleading recruiting, clear information about total costs and program requirements, accommodation for deployments, ensuring a point of contact for veterans, and not being under a punitive action by an accreditor.

[Resolution No. 318: Ensuring the Quality of Servicemember and Veteran Student's Education at Institutions of Higher Education](#)

Status: Became Public Law No: 116-315

HR 6957: To direct the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to treat a period of full-time National Guard duty, performed in response to the national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, by the President concerning COVID-19, as not shorter than 90 days.

[Resolution No.: Currently studying for appropriate resolution.](#)

HR 4920, Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020: This is a bill that would allow AbilityOne companies to keep their preferential treatment at the Department of Veteran Affairs after 2016 with some compromises. The Senate initially sent it back to the House after it was passed for changes. Those changes have been reconciled, and the bill cleared its last hurdle before it is sent to the White House.

S. 2594: To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans' Preference for federal hiring.

TOPIC 3b: ACTION TAKEN ON LEGISLATION

Building Credit Access for Veterans Act: A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to establish an automated process for obtaining alternative credit rating information and other purposes.

Status: Draft Bill / Letter of Support submitted on October 13

HR 8426: Protecting Apprenticeship Training for Veterans Act: Currently, veterans must meet a minimum number of apprenticeship hours to receive their Housing Allowance. Due to pandemic work shortages, veterans in those programs now face a reduction or suspension in their stipend. This would allow veteran apprentices who were laid off to roll over excess hours from a previous month to meet the hourly requirement.

[Resolution: Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

Status: Letter of Support drafted

HR 4941, Veteran Employment Transition Act” or the “VET Act”: Was sponsored by Representative Andy Kim. The bill's last action was in the House on 12/02/2019; it was referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The bill's goal is to improve the Transition Assistance Program. The bill would allow certain veterans' service organizations to contact veterans regarding benefits and better inform veterans of employment opportunities. The Service groups would inform veterans of the benefits and employment opportunities with the Federal, State, and local governments. The groups inform veterans of events in the area.

[Resolution No. 70: Improve Transition Assistance Program](#)

Status: Letter of Support submitted

HR 7003: Is a bill sponsored by Rep. Takano, Mark D-CA-41, and was introduced 05/22/2020. The bill would authorize a pilot program in the Department of Defense to enhance efforts to provide job placement assistance and related employment services directly to the National Guard, Reserves,

and veterans of the Armed Forces. The last action on the bill was 05/22/2020 and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

[Resolution No. 81: Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshops for National Guard and Reserve Members](#)

Status: Pending Letter of Support

Draft Bill: Veterans Educational Assistance Transparency and Accountability Improvement Act, improve the G.I. Bill Comparison Tool ensures veterans, servicemembers, and their families are better informed when choosing what educational institution is best for them.

Status: Letter of Support submitted

H.R. 711, West Los Angeles VA Campus Improvement Act of 2021: This legislation would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) West Los Angeles Medical Center campus to use revenues from leases and easements as a dedicated funding source to build additional housing for homeless veterans, offset the high costs of housing construction, and help fund the provision of supportive services for veterans in the community.

[Resolution No. 141: Department of Veterans Affairs Enhanced-Use Leasing](#)

Status: This bill was submitted for the April 21, 2021 testimony.

H.R. 2082, VA Supply Chain Resiliency Act: To make certain improvements relating to the supply chain of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

[Resolution No. 13: Support “Buy American” Policy within the Federal Government to Create Opportunities for Veterans](#)

Status: This bill was submitted for the April 21, 2021 testimony.

TOPIC 4a: EMPLOYMENT

NEED A JOB? POST-COVID, VA FOCUSED ON EXPANDING CURRENT PROGRAMS, NOT CREATING NEW ONES



*Staff from the Veterans Affairs' Employment Services Office take part in a hiring fair in 2012.
(Photo: VA photo)*

Veterans Affairs officials aren't pushing for new job training programs to help counter lingering employment challenges from the coronavirus pandemic, but they are eyeing expansion of existing ones as demand grows.

“I see a real opportunity here for us to take really effective programming and test it even further,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough told reporters in a press call this week.

“VET TEC is a good example. It's working well, the president is asking for additional funding. That's a concrete example of something that is proven and now we can grow it.”

About 380,000 veterans filed for unemployment benefits last month, almost two-thirds lower than the 1.1 million who requested that assistance in the first few weeks of the pandemic in America.

But the jobless figure is still up about 100,000 veterans from pre-pandemic levels, a source of concern for lawmakers and advocates looking to ensure that troops leaving the ranks in recent months or later this year have the tools needed to succeed in civilian life.

Last month, VA officials began accepting applications for a new congressionally authorized rapid retaining program for veterans who lost their jobs because of pandemic closures and restrictions. VA officials said they have approved a few thousand applications so far. The program is capped at 17,000 individuals.

Meanwhile, the department has already seen high demand for its Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program, and late last month requested a nearly threefold increase in that \$45 million pilot program in next year's budget to keep up with demand.

McDonough said those existing programs, combined with other Department of Labor initiatives focused on veterans and the GI Bill benefits used annually by tens of thousands of veterans, provide a solid base of options to help get veterans into well-paying jobs.

For now, the department is focused on finding ways to improve and broaden those existing efforts, not to add new programs.

"With our VA data strategy, I hope we can start to see more anonymized information to show the impact of these programs over time," he said. "And then we can prioritize where we might make investments.

"[Veterans employment] continues to be a priority for the president, and I think we'll be in a position through the generation of additional data to make [our programs] more effective." Robert Frick, corporate economist at Navy Federal Credit Union, said he expects the biggest boosts for veteran employment this year to come from broader job creation programs.

President Joe Biden's infrastructure proposals, for example, are expected to add thousands of new positions in manufacturing, construction and government contracting work — all economic sectors with large numbers of former military members.

But advocates said analysis of the existing veterans specific programs will also be key in ensuring that they are getting the extra attention they may need.

"We're very encouraged by what we've seen so far," said Patrick Murray, director of the National Legislative Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to members of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on Wednesday.

"I think transparent, regular reporting about those programs would help. Let us know where we need to double down. We're gonna invest in programs that are going to put people back to work, put food on the table. So it's important for us to know exactly how successful those [current] programs are."

TOPIC 4b: EMPLOYMENT

VETERAN EMPLOYMENT IMPROVES, BUT CONCERNS REMAIN OVER JOB RETENTION

Despite the veteran unemployment rate climbing by nearly 30% at the peak of the pandemic, the number was still drastically lower than the civilian unemployment rate in Texas and across the country. It's an extremely different picture compared to just a decade ago.

"When I enlisted in '98, you were an airman basic, and you were called an airman in basic training," recalled MSgt. Priscilla Sanchez.

Today, those in basic training are referred to as trainees until the day they graduate. A lot has changed since Sanchez first started out in the Air Force. Her 23-year military career has taken her all over the world.



(Photo: Spectrum News 1/Matthew Mershon)

"In 2005, I deployed with the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group to Bagram, Afghanistan," said Sanchez, holding a patch earned during her mission.

Last year, Sanchez was stationed at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio. Having family with health needs and faced with the likelihood of another deployment, since Sanchez finally qualified for pension, she decided it was time to retire from the Air Force. But at age 41, her retirement from the service doesn't mean she's retiring altogether.

"I can't live off my retirement alone without working. I can, but it would have to be in a third-world country," chuckled Sanchez. "I'd have to give up a lot my needs that I have now, a lot of the stuff I'm comfortable with."

So that meant making the transition into the civilian workforce.

"It's a difficult transition for some people," commented Sanchez. "For me and my personal case, I didn't find it as difficult, only because I was very proactive and I started applying for jobs six months out after I decided that I was going to retire."

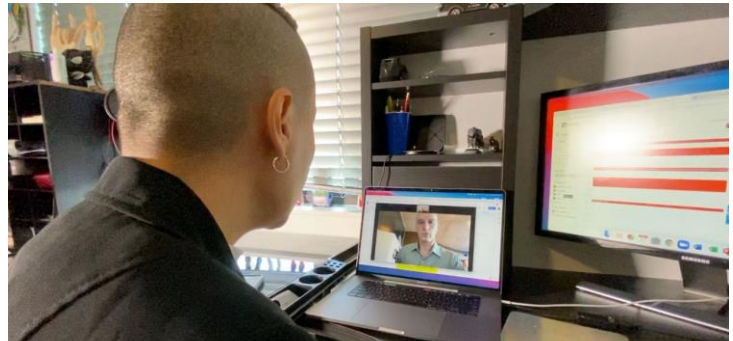
Sanchez's planner attitude, combined with participating in the military's Transition Assistance Program, or TAPS, helped make the process go much more smoothly.

About two months ago, Sanchez landed a job as the chief of staff for the CEO of Maxwell Biosciences, an up and coming Austin-based biotech company. It certainly helped that her new boss was an Air Force veteran himself, and looked specifically at area Air Force bases to hire his new right hand. He knew the skills military members possess, specifically in the Air Force.

It wasn't always such a pretty picture for veteran employment. Just a decade ago, the national veteran unemployment rate was nearly 9%. For certain veteran subsets, like Gulf War II era vets, the rate was even higher.

“Specifically the Army, when you look back at 2011, they paid over \$600 million or close to it in unemployment costs for soldiers who were exiting the army,” said Bob Gear, director of the Texas Veterans’ Leadership Program with the Texas Workforce Commission.

Gear said a multitude of state and federal resources have been leveraged to help combat veteran unemployment over the last ten years, and it’s helped. Veteran unemployment was down to less than 3% just before the pandemic hit.



(Photo: Spectrum News 1/Matthew Mershon)

But another problem lurks in the background, job retention. Gear said he’s heard reports of veterans jumping between as many as three to even eight different jobs within the first year of civilian work. A 2014 Syracuse University study suggests nearly half of all veterans leave their first civilian jobs within the first year, nearly 80% by year two.

“It takes time sometimes for veterans to figure out what they really want to do for one,” said Gear. “The other part — 'Do they have the education, do they have the certification, do they have licensure for that particular thing? What is their family situation?' There are so many factors that come into play.”

It’s why there’s a continuing push for better veteran hiring practices in the private sector, including better on-boarding and support systems within the business sector.

Sanchez is hoping to balk the turnover trend. She says she’s excited about her new job and looks forward to completing plenty of missions, albeit for a different team.

The American Legion support legislative and administrative measures that seek to encourage and recognize organizations that hire veterans as found in **Resolution No. 316: Support Employment of Veterans in the Public and Private Workforce**

TOPIC 5a: EDUCATION

VA BEDFORD’S FIVE-YEAR TRANSFORMATION TO A LEARNING, TEACHING CULTURE

This year, the Veterans Health Administration is celebrating 75 years of service to Veterans while also forming a new vision for the future of health care. It’s also the 75th anniversary for VHA’s Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA).

Through OAA, VHA partners with medical schools, universities and colleges to provide training programs at VHA facilities. As a result of that partnership, VA Bedford Healthcare System's



The importance of VA's Office of Academic Affiliations

graduate medical education programs have a renewed focus on leading-edge training in geriatrics.

This includes training for non-specialists, pain and addiction medicine, and interprofessional education and collaboration.

VA Bedford was a preferred destination for training in the associated health professions, psychiatry and fellowship geriatrics in the early 2000s.

Pictured above, residents and interns of VA Bedford's Geriatric Evaluation and Management unit celebrate the completion of their rotation in 2019. From left to right: Dr. Jawad Husain, Boston University Medical Center Psychiatry intern on medicine rotation; Dr. Philip Tsoukas, Lahey Hospital Internal Medicine resident on geriatrics rotation; Dr. Adi Rattner, Boston University Medical Center Family Medicine resident on geriatrics rotation; and Dr. Kristin Palmer, VA Bedford physical therapist.

VA HOSPITALS ALLIED WITH TEACHING INSTITUTIONS

Locating Veterans' hospitals near medical schools was a fundamental part of Gen. Omar Bradley's vision to reform Veterans' hospitals, allying them with teaching institutions and, where and when possible, incorporating residencies and internships in these hospitals.

Despite little administrative or education infrastructure, or professional development for clinician-educators, residents filled 15 positions from two academic affiliates, training in what had become a sought-after apprenticeship model.

VA plays a key leadership role in defining the education of future health care professionals to meet the changing needs of America's health care system. Almost 70 percent of the country's health care providers receive medical training at a VA facility. The skills and knowledge they learn from VA are implemented in hospitals and clinics across the country.

CHOICE ACT PROVIDED 1,500 NEW POSITIONS

In 2014, President Obama signed the Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act. The act allowed VA to add up to 1,500 new positions over five years. Grants administered by OAA between 2015 and 2018 awarded VA Bedford seven additional resident positions in family and internal medicine.

There was also infrastructure support for a designated education officer, a dedicated site director and a training specialist.

To realize these revitalized health professions programs, VA Bedford realigned resources in six areas.

VA Bedford won additional infrastructure and graduate medical education enhancement grants over the ensuing three years. This brought another six resident positions to the facility

They also provided needed support for space renovation, program administration and supplies for teaching, teaching awards and professional development activities.

VA TRAINED CLINICIANS EMPLOY VA STANDARDS OF CARE

VA develops new standards of care for health conditions commonly experienced by Veterans. And VA-trained clinicians continue to employ these innovations as they care for non-Veteran patients throughout their careers.



VA Bedford was a preferred destination for fellowship geriatrics.

VOICES OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Here is a short video of comments from health professions trainees about their time at VA Bedford Healthcare System highlighting their education and training.

The facility now hosts twenty-nine resident positions from six academic affiliates. Funding has resulted in markedly improved fiscal accountability, administrative infrastructure, on-boarding processes and relationships with academic affiliates.

VA Bedford education leadership seeks to ensure all rotations' learning objectives, educational activities and means of assessment are cognitive science-based, aligned and shared with participating trainees.

Funding and OAA support have resulted in an institutional "Commitment to a Learning and Teaching Culture of Excellence." This change is manifest throughout the VA Bedford Healthcare System and the region.

VETERAN HEALTH CARE CONSISTENT WITH BEST STANDARDS OF CARE

Bradley's strategy of supporting close relationships with schools of medicine to facilitate recruitment of well-trained physicians on a large scale remains ideal.

It ensures Veterans' health care remains consistent with the best standards of care. It also establishes an environment in which research and education specific to issues in Veterans' health can flourish.

VHA is an organization that allows health care providers to practice innovative, ground-breaking health care.

If you are looking to pursue mission-driven work, serving those who have served our country, visit vacareers.va.gov to explore options in your area.

TOPIC 5b: EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCES APPROVAL OF NEW CATEGORIES OF BORROWER DEFENSE CLAIMS TOTALING \$500 MILLION IN LOAN RELIEF TO 18,000 BORROWERS



Biden's Education Department just cancelled \$500 million of student debt for 18,000 defrauded borrowers.

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) announced today the approval of 18,000 borrower defense to repayment (borrower defense) claims for individuals who attended ITT Technical Institute (ITT). These borrowers will receive 100 percent loan discharges, resulting in approximately \$500 million in relief. This brings total loan cancellation under borrower defense by the Biden-Harris Administration to \$1.5 billion for approximately 90,000 borrowers.

“Our action today will give thousands of borrowers a fresh start and the relief they deserve after ITT repeatedly lied to them,” said Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. “Today’s action is part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s continued commitment to stand up for borrowers when their institutions take advantage of them. Many of these borrowers have waited a long time for relief, and we need to work swiftly to render decisions for those whose claims are still pending. This work also emphasizes the need for ongoing accountability so that institutions will never be able to commit this kind of widespread deception again.”

These approvals cover two categories of claims submitted by borrowers who attended ITT: their likely employment prospects and the ability to transfer credits. This is the first approval of a new category of borrower defense claims by the Department since January 2017.

On employment prospects, the Department is expanding findings that it had previously made just for students who attended ITT in California to cover borrowers regardless of where they attended. ED’s review of the evidence found that ITT made repeated and significant misrepresentations to students related to how much they could expect to earn and the jobs they could obtain after graduation between 2005 and the institution’s closure in 2016. In reality, borrowers repeatedly stated that including ITT attendance on resumes made it harder for them to find employment, and their job prospects were not improved by attending ITT.

Similarly, the Department found that ITT misled students about the ability to transfer their credits to other institutions from January 2007 through October 2014. The Department found that credits rarely transferred and borrowers made little to no progress along their educational journey, yet were saddled with student loan debt as a result of their time at ITT.

These findings were made possible thanks to evidence provided by partners at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Iowa Office of the Attorney General, as well as Veterans Education Success. The Department looks forward to continuing to work with these organizations and others whenever schools engage in conduct that harms borrowers.

The Department will begin notifying borrowers of their approvals in the coming weeks and will then work expeditiously to discharge the approximately \$500 million loan balances for these borrowers.

Today's action continues efforts by the Department to provide targeted loan relief to student borrowers and ensure borrower defense and other relief programs are delivering promised assistance to borrowers. In March, the agency took action to grant \$1 billion in relief to 72,000 borrowers with previously approved borrower defense claims. The Department also suspended requests for earnings documentation from borrowers who had received a total and permanent disability discharge. This action reinstated discharges for 41,000 borrowers and will help protect another 190,000 borrowers from the risk of losing their discharges. Additionally, the Department announced plans to conduct rulemaking on borrower defense, total and permanent disability discharges, and other items, starting with public hearings on June 21, 23, and 24.

For more information about borrower defense, visit StudentAid.gov/borrower-defense. For more information on the upcoming public hearings, [click here](#)

The American Legion support legislation and/or administrative rulemaking that protects and enforces the principles upon which Gainful Employment and Borrower Relief were drafted in previous rulemaking as found in **Resolution No. 82: Preserve Veteran and Servicemember Rights to Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense Protections**

TOPIC 6a: VETERAN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

\$269.9 BILLION 2022 VA BUDGET REQUEST SUBMITTED

Homeless, jobless and unemployed veterans would stand to benefit under the Biden administration's proposed \$269.9 billion budget request for the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2022.



Key elements include:

\$2.2 billion for programs assisting homeless veterans. This would include \$486 million in American Rescue Plan funding. Case-management, procuring permanent housing through vouchers, and prevention of homelessness for low-income veterans would be prioritized. Another \$598 million would be dedicated to outreach programs aimed at preventing suicide by intervening before situations reach a crisis state.

Enhanced education and job training programs, and a better digital system for veterans who are using their GI Bill benefits to pay for education. The Veterans' Clean Energy Job Training program, which is conducted together with the Labor Department, and the VA Disability Employment Pilot Project would receive additional funding.

Creation of a new Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion within VA, to help foster diversity, equity and inclusion for all veterans regardless of race and sexual orientation.

Increasing the Caregiver Support Program to \$1.4 billion – \$350 million more than 2021 funding levels — to support those who care for veterans. The budget also supports the plan to gradually

expand the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to include all eligible veterans.

TOPIC 6b: VETERAN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The end of pandemic financial protections coupled with the lingering housing challenges of recent years could lead to “an unprecedented wave of veterans homelessness” in coming months, advocates warned lawmakers on Wednesday.

They’re pushing for more resources to help those vulnerable veterans but also intervention from federal and local officials to maintain those protections for a little longer, to prevent a potential tragedy.

“We shouldn’t necessarily be ending these eviction moratoriums and foreclosure breaks,” said Kathryn Monet, chief executive officer for the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. “I don’t think the economy has recovered to a point where people are able to cover all of these expenses. “We need to continue doing this, not forever, but until people can get back on their feet.”

But that idea received pushback from some Republicans on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, who argued that as communities reopen after months of pandemic restrictions, business practices and regulations must return to normal.

And Veterans Affairs officials said that despite the looming challenges, they are optimistic about the opportunities ahead to finally end veterans homelessness in America.

“We have the expertise and experience that generated significant declines in veteran levels of homelessness in the past, we have leadership commitment and support, and we have unprecedented resources and statutory flexibility,” Keith Harris, director of clinical operations of VA’s Homeless Programs Office, told committee members.

“Now is the time to recapture momentum and finish the job.”

Federal officials in 2010 set the goal of ending chronic veterans homelessness in the United States. The levels dropped by nearly half from 2010 to 2016.

But the figures have largely plateaued since then, and in March officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that the number of veterans without stable housing across the country rose slightly from 2019 to 2020, to about 37,250 individuals.



*The grocery cart and chair of a person experiencing homelessness is shown along Fifth Avenue during New York City's annual Veterans Day parade in 2006.
(Photo: Michael Nagle/Getty Images)*

That estimate was compiled before the start of the coronavirus pandemic, which caused unemployment levels to spike and shuttered many outreach efforts to veterans facing financial issues.

As a result, most federal researchers and outside advocates are predicting an even larger rise in the homelessness figures this year, though have not predicted just how high the numbers may rise. HUD's estimate for early 2021 is expected to be released sometime this fall.

Monet and other advocates warned that coming months will be a critical time for the community, and that rushed or incomplete support programs could easily result in increases in homelessness levels in communities that had nearly solved the problem over the last decade.

VA officials have requested more than \$2.6 billion for homeless prevention and support programs in the fiscal 2022 budget, an increase of about 14.5 percent.

But advocates said that the amount of money dedicated to case management in the budget plan is still too low to handle current levels, and lamented that thousands of housing vouchers have gone unused in recent months because of housing placement challenges.

"Having vouchers sitting un-utilized is a terrible waste of funding," Money said.

Harris said VA officials are working to better use those funds and improve existing services. VA is looking to expand shelter programs and employment assistance, as well as more health care services for veterans.

But he also acknowledged that changes in community financial protections could have a negative impact on the department's efforts.

"It's impossible to do an accurate forecast for the impact of that," he said. "We're as concerned as anyone about the possible impact of lifting eviction moratoriums, but we're also prepared to face that."

Officials may not fully grasp the extent of the problem until well into the future.

HUD's annual veterans homelessness estimates are based largely off of surveys and in-person counts conducted each January. That means the 2021 figures due out this fall will be based on conditions from before pandemic re-openings restarted.

The impact of changes in eviction moratoriums and debt collection delays won't be reflected until the 2022 homeless estimates due out in fall of next year. Advocates warn that by then, making needed changes to provide additional support to vulnerable veterans may be months too late.

The American Legion supports funding for vouchers for the HUD-VASH program to be set aside and transferred to the VA Secretary from amounts made available for rental assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher program as found in **Resolution No. 357: Mandatory Funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Veterans Affairs (VA) Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Homeless Program**

TOPIC 6c: VETERAN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS BENEFIT FROM EXPANDED VA HOME LOAN PROGRAM



More than 50,000 Guard soldiers and airmen have gained VA loan eligibility because of the legislative change, according to estimates from the National Guard Association of the United States. (Photo: Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

The VA loan program, popular with members of the military and veterans because they can buy a home without a down payment or mortgage insurance, was broadened by legislation signed in January to make it easier for members of the National Guard to qualify for the loans.

In addition, the VA loan program doesn't have borrowing limits, which means the program can be beneficial in high-cost housing markets.

Before January, National Guard troops were only eligible after completing one of the following: six years of honorable service, 90 days of getting called up during wartime or 181 days of non-wartime because of a service-connected injury, wrote Louise Thaxton, branch manager at Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation in Leesville, La., in an email.

"The new law authorizes VA loan benefit access for those service members and veterans mobilized to perform full-time National Guard duty for not less than 90 cumulative days, including at least 30 days consecutively," Thaxton wrote. "This expanded eligibility is being applied retroactively. Many National Guard members logged qualifying service in 2020 as part of the nationwide covid-19 response and are now eligible."

Why VA loans may be the best pathway to homeownership for veterans

The new rules basically accelerate the timeline of VA loan eligibility for National Guard members who've performed full-time duty, wrote Chris Birk in an email. Birk is vice president of mortgage insight and director of education for Veterans United Home Loans.

“National Guard members have had access to the VA loan benefit since 1992,” Birk wrote. “In most cases, eligibility kicks in after six years of service. The government also grants eligibility to Guard members called to active-duty service under Title 10 of the U.S. Code, provided they serve at least 90 consecutive days.”

The Guard is unique as the only component of the military with dual state and federal missions, Birk wrote. “State missions typically occur under the order of a governor, with Guard members paid by the state through state active-duty orders,” he wrote. “Because they are strictly state missions, they don’t count toward federal GI Bill benefits, including the home loan program.”

During some disasters, such as the covid-19 pandemic and Hurricane Katrina, National Guard troops support state responses while on federal Title 32 orders. Historically, these orders didn’t grant early access to the VA loan benefit either, Birk wrote.

“This new legislation eliminates that gap,” he wrote. “Now, National Guard members mobilized under Title 32 orders can be eligible for a VA loan after serving 90 days of full-time duty, of which at least 30 days must have been consecutive.”

The National Guard Association of the United States estimates more than 50,000 Guard soldiers and airmen gained VA loan eligibility because of this legislative change. Many of those Guard members served on the front lines of the covid-19 pandemic.

VA loan overview

A VA Loan is a mortgage backed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA does not make the loans; private lenders do, Thaxton wrote. Eligible borrowers can use a VA loan to purchase a property as their primary residence or refinance an existing mortgage.

Borrowers with not-so-perfect credit may be eligible for FHA home loans

Veterans have turned to their home loan benefit in record numbers since the Great Recession, according to Birk. VA backed a record 1.2 million loans in fiscal year 2020, he wrote.

Benefits of the VA loan program include:

- No down payment.
- No mortgage insurance.
- Flexible credit guidelines.
- Lowest average fixed rate on the market.

VA loans are available in the same kind of mortgage terms as conventional loans, although 30-year terms are the most common, according to Birk. There are fixed- and adjustable-rate options available. Lender offerings vary.

“The VA has loan limits, but these do not represent a cap on borrowing,” Birk wrote. “In most cases, veterans can borrow as much as they can afford without the need for a down payment, whether it’s \$150,000 or \$1.5 million. The limits come into play for veterans with diminished VA loan entitlement, either because they have an active VA loan and want to purchase again, or because they defaulted on a previous VA loan.”

But even then, the limits simply help determine how much a veteran can borrow without having to make a down payment, Birk wrote. “VA loans are arguably the most powerful loan option on the market,” Birk wrote.

The American Legion reaffirms its strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Service and its programs and any administrative and/or legislative efforts that will improve and strengthen the Loan Guaranty Service's ability to serve America's veterans as found in **Resolution No. 329: Support Home Loan Guaranty Program**

TOPIC 7a: SMALL BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND HAS A NEW SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTER FOR VETERANS

University of Maryland, College Park will be home to Maryland’s first **Veterans Business Outreach Center**. The center aims to be a one-stop shop for transitioning or active-duty service members and veterans, offering resources such as biz workshops, mentorship and government contracts guidance.

The Veterans Business Outreach Center at College Park will be one center in a system of [22 outreach centers](#) across the country supported and funded by the U.S. **Small Business Administration (SBA)** and the anchor institutions that house them.



“Empowering more of our veterans with the tools they need to become successful small business owners will provide a boost to the entire entrepreneurial ecosystem across Maryland,” said Sen. **Ben Cardin** (D-Maryland), chair of the **U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship**, in a statement.

This center will be boon for Maryland’s nearly 400,000 veterans and 15 military bases, including the **U.S. Naval Academy**, the **Aberdeen Proving Ground** and **Fort Detrick**. This location of the VBOC system will also cover D.C., Delaware and Pennsylvania.

Transitioning or active duty service members, veterans, National Guard or reserves, and military spouses will all be eligible for support from the outreach centers.

“At the SBA, we want our military entrepreneurs to know that we’re here to help them harness that spirit and use the skills and expertise they gained in the military to start, grow and sustain successful small businesses,” said U.S. Small Business Administrator **Isabella Guzman**. “We’re doing that work with this award to the University of Maryland. Our message to our nation’s military entrepreneurs is this: You invested in our country. Now, it’s our turn to invest in you.”

TOPIC 7b: SMALL BUSINESS

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES FUNDING COMPETITION FOR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS TRAINING

Washington, DC. - [The U.S. Small Business Administration](#) recently announced that non-profit organizations and private sector firms are now eligible to compete for funding of up to \$500,000 to deliver federal procurement training to veteran and service-disabled veteran entrepreneurs. The application period continues through July 12, 2021.

Up to two awardees will use the \$500,000 in total funding to participate in the Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program with grants [from SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development](#). Awards are for a base project period of 12 months, with three option periods of 12 months each. These funds will cover the costs of educating veterans who intend to pursue, or are already engaged in, federal contracting.

"With the U.S. Government being the single largest purchaser of goods and services in the world, there is a tremendous opportunity for our veteran-owned small business community to tap into government contracting," said Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator for the SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development. "Through this program, we will continue to provide grants to train and empower veterans and service-disabled veterans as they enter and expand in the federal marketplace."

Eligible organizations must submit applications for the Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program funding opportunity **by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 12, 2021**, through [Grants.gov](#). Search for opportunity number [SB-OVVT-21-001](#). Applications not submitted via [Grants.gov](#) will not be evaluated.

SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development hosts a conference call Tuesday, June 22, 2021, at 2 p.m. EDT to answer questions related to the Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program grant announcement. Please submit any questions to Jerry Godwin at jerry.godwin@sba.gov no later than Thursday, June 17, 2021. To join the call, please use the following information:

- Join through [Microsoft Teams](#) or,
- Join by phone: 202-765-1264; Access code: 384 283 442#

TOPIC 8: CAREER FAIRS

[Virtual Job Fair](#)

June 24, 2021, 1pm - 3pm

VIRTUAL HIRING EVENT: RETAIL & HOSPITALITY

1-3pm: Military community job seekers from around the globe will meet, network, and interview with retail & hospitality industry employers at this interactive virtual hiring event.

Presented by [Hiring Our Heroes](#)
[More information](#)

The American Legion's National Veterans Employment & Education Commission's Mission is to take actions that affect veterans' economic well-being, including issues relating to veterans' education, employment, home loans, vocational rehabilitation, homelessness, and small business.

Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr., Director
Veterans Employment & Education Division
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Week Ending: 6/18/2021