



# From Deployment to Employment

## Goodwill's Call to Action on Supporting Military Service Members, Veterans and Their Families

**As the United States prepares to withdraw from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the need for a continuum of coordinated services for military service members, veterans and their families is at an all-time high.**

A significant portion of military service members, veterans and their families face challenges including physical and psychological disabilities, substance abuse and homelessness. In addition, the stubbornly bleak job market presents a significant challenge for military service members, veterans and family members who aim to fully participate in the civilian workforce and provide for themselves and their families.

While a variety of supports are already available, there is still a clear need for agencies to improve and increase services to this unique population.

In its newest white paper — *From Deployment to Employment: Goodwill's Call to Action on Supporting Military Service Members, Veterans and Their Families* — Goodwill® calls upon all stakeholders (including Goodwill member organizations) to ensure that the support system for military service members, veterans and their families 1) is easy to understand and navigate, 2) coordinates services and information among federal agencies, and 3) promotes local stakeholder collaboration.

### Specific Recommendations for U.S. Policymakers

As military service members make the transition to the civilian workforce, they face a difficult job market while existing supports are stretched thin. The implications of these circumstances are too significant to expect the federal government and stakeholders to address without more deliberate collaboration and integration among all stakeholders.

Existing supports and infrastructure are ill-equipped to provide adequate resources that many returning service members may need and have earned.

Policymakers should enact policies that improve collaboration among public and private stakeholders, and address barriers that make it difficult for military service members, veterans and family members to find jobs and advance in careers.

#### Recommendations include:

- Enact policies that **create a more seamless service delivery system** for military service members, veterans and their families.
- Give priority to federal grant applications that demonstrate **partnership and coordination among local providers** and stakeholders.
- Enact policies that increase involvement of and **collaboration with community-based organizations** that have demonstrated expertise in providing services, such as mentoring and job training, that can help many military service members, veterans and their families succeed in the workforce.
- Make the workforce system more accessible and convenient for veterans by including provisions in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) that promotes the **co-location of one-stop career centers in VA medical centers** and other facilities that serve veterans.
- Require the Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Defense (DOD) to jointly **develop "crosswalks" for transferable skills** from military occupational specialties to civilian jobs, and create certifications for skills acquired in the military that can be transferred for college credit or certification.
- Mandate that separating service members **participate in the Transitional Assistance Program** and that each service member receives an individualized assessment of civilian jobs for which they may qualify.
- Allow military spouses who have lost attachment to the labor market due to military transfer to be **eligible for services for dislocated workers**.
- Require the DOD to **provide official discharge certificates** (Form DD-214) to homeless veterans within three weeks of request.
- Prohibit jails and prisons from releasing individuals without identification, including discharge certificates (Form DD-214), driver's licenses, government ID cards and social security cards.



- Build and maintain a **comprehensive national and state directory of employment programs for veterans** and identify their purpose, the services they offer and how to find them.
- Require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), DOD and DOL to establish a **secure and centralized database that contains information about all services for which veterans are eligible** and all services that they have already received.
- For any veteran requesting services, require the VA to **assign a case manager who is aware of all services for which the veteran is eligible** and all services that the veteran has already received.
- Require the VA and DOL to collaboratively reach out to veterans to confirm their employment and/or **offer services that may help them find jobs** or advance in their careers.
- Provide an additional **24 months of vocational rehabilitation and employment services** to veterans who have exhausted both these benefits and state-provided unemployment benefits.
- **Create additional incentives for the workforce system** to deliver services to and achieve positive employment outcomes for populations with disproportionately high unemployment, such as veterans who are younger than 24.

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## Goodwill in Action

**Goodwill Southern California (Los Angeles)** has implemented a pilot program to address the job training needs of the veteran community in Los Angeles County. Five veterans with service-connected disabilities run the program. They represent all branches of service. The objective of the 15-month pilot program is to enroll 140 veterans and place 83 veterans in unsubsidized employment by June 30, 2012. Additionally, more than 5,000 veterans will be served through self-directed programs.

**Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries (Cincinnati, OH)** has administered the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (HVRP) since 1998. Through an HVRP grant, the agency has provided job training and housing assistance to veterans who are homeless. Since January 2008, the program has served 861 veterans and has a 90 percent job placement rate.

**Goodwill Industries of the Silicon Valley (San Jose, CA)** has received an HVRP grant to serve veterans who are homeless. Two case managers, an instructor, a peer mentor and the program manager on staff address veterans' needs. A clinical psychologist supervises seven interns to provide assessment and counseling. Approximately 25 percent of placements are within Goodwill in transitional employment/on-the-job training, where they can remain for up to six months. One project has veterans deconstructing mattresses, the components of which are sold to recyclers. Those revenues are reinvested to support the program. In 2010, the agency served 270 veterans, a significant increase over the 61 served in 2007.

**Goodwill Industries of Houston (TX)** operates five employment programs for veterans: the HVRP, the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program, the Female Homeless Veterans and Homeless Veterans with Families Program, the Veterans Workforce Investment Program, and the Gulf War Veterans Employment and Training Services. In 2010, Houston served 1,105 veterans.

## MY STORY: Ashley Call

I joined the Army National Guard in June 2006 while attending high school. After graduation, I worked various low-paying jobs until I was called to active duty. I was deployed to Iraq from 2009 to 2010, working as an emergency medic at a camp 20 miles south of Baghdad.

After completing my tour of duty, I returned to Virginia, where I began looking for suitable employment while maintaining my status in the Army National Guard. Unable to find employment, I signed up for unemployment with the VA Employment Commission. I found myself in a position of being a live-in housekeeper. It was not a good living arrangement.

Even though I had experience as an emergency medic, no one would offer me employment because I didn't have a civilian certificate.

During a visit to the VA Employment Commission, I discussed my situation with my counselor. She informed me about the dislocated workers program, operated by Goodwill Industries of the Valleys (Roanoke, VA).



I enrolled in medical assisting training that taught me to work in a doctors' office, provide assistance during patient examinations, keep patient and related electronic health records information, and perform clinical, administrative and laboratory duties.

The opportunity provided to me by Goodwill will enable me to work in a field I find exciting and rewarding.

## About Goodwill

Goodwill generates opportunities for people to achieve economic stability and build strong families and vibrant communities by offering job training, employment placement services and other community-based programs for people who have disabilities, lack education or job experience, or face other employment challenges. In 2010, approximately 170,000 people obtained meaningful employment as a result of Goodwill career services programs. Collectively, these employees earned \$2.7 billion in salaries and wages and contributed to their communities as productive, tax-paying citizens.

***For more information or to receive a full copy of the white paper, contact Goodwill Industries International.***

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