



OPERATION: GOODJOBS

GOODWILL® VETERANS AND
MILITARY FAMILY SERVICES



GOODWILL® REPORT ON EFFECTIVE VETERAN AND MILITARY FAMILY SERVICES



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goodwill understands that successful reintegration is a team effort. In 1947, Goodwill entered into an agreement with the Veteran's Administration (VA) to receive referrals and offer training to veterans with disabilities at its locations nationwide as they transitioned to civilian life after World War II. Since that time, Goodwill has provided a variety of services to veterans and military family members to ensure their specific challenges are addressed.

Over the past decade, the number of veterans and military family members using Goodwill services has steadily grown. In 2010, veterans represented just 2 percent of all people using Goodwill services; that share grew to 4 percent in 2018, while the proportion of Goodwill organizations serving veterans increased from 73 percent to 88 percent. Services to military family members has grown even more, from 19 percent of Goodwill's reporting military family member services in 2010 to 75 percent in 2018.

Part of this growth resulted from Walmart Foundation grant investments into Goodwill Industries International (GII) and 16 local Goodwill organizations, which are focusing on providing supports that include effective job readiness training and up-skilling, financial wellness, employment services and wrap-around support services for veterans and military family members. At the same time, these effective practice examples are being shared across the entire Goodwill network.

Over the past decade, as the economy recovered from the Great Recession of 2008 – 2009, employment rates improved for veterans but lagged behind their

non-veteran counterparts. The 2015 Blue Stars Families survey revealed that veterans find it difficult to earn employment that matches their skills, education and desired career field. Of all veterans surveyed, 53 percent were not working in their preferred career fields, and 40 percent described their transition to employment as “difficult” or “very difficult.” Veterans continue to encounter employers that do not understand how to translate military experience and training into civilian workplace requirements. This is an especially important factor among small and mid-sized companies, which represent more than 80 percent of veteran hiring.

For these and many other reasons, the need to improve veteran delivery systems for customized veteran services provided by Goodwill and its partners is still great.

The Goodwill Report on Effective Veteran and Military Family Services summarizes effective practice recommendations from the Goodwill organizations that participated in the Operation: GoodJobs program, funded by the Walmart Foundation.





EFFECTIVE PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Staffing and Service Delivery

- Hire veterans, military spouses and other military family members who are familiar with the requirements of being active duty military and as well as the challenges faced during the transition to civilian life.
- Hire women veterans or military family members, as they are more effective for recruiting and serving women veterans.
- If civilians are part of the team delivering veteran services, provide them with training on military and transition experiences and help them learn commonly used terminology.
- Create a branded, dedicated space for providing veteran services, including safe separate spaces for women veterans to receive services.
- Improve veteran access to multiple services by co-locating with other veteran-serving organizations.

Recruitment and Enrollment of Veterans and Military Family Members

- To establish your Goodwill as an organization that serves veterans and military family members, network with other established, well-known and respected veteran-serving organizations.
- Use customized outreach materials to highlight the availability of veteran services.
- Introduce your Goodwill to nearby military installation leadership and seek opportunities for formal partnerships.



Specialized Services for Women Veterans

- Seek women veterans to fill positions in Goodwill programs serving veterans. Women veterans may be more likely to seek services and remain engaged if given the opportunity to be served by women veterans.
- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer support and networking among women veterans. Many women veterans feel isolated and don't know how to connect with others who had similar experiences in the military.
- Collaborate with organizations and support services that are specifically dedicated to serving women, including women veterans.



Second-Chance Veterans

- Co-enroll with Veterans Affairs (VA) justice outreach programs or a local justice system reentry program to coordinate services to leverage resources that will help individuals overcome barriers to employment.

Translate Military Skills to Civilian Workforce

- Incorporate online resources that translate military experience into civilian jobs. Provide dedicated staff to help veterans use that information to build Individual career and financial plans to pursue their chosen civilian career path.
- Influence employers' hiring practices to open opportunities for veterans.

Assessments of Skills, Strengths and Needs

- Use a strengths-based and person-centered approach to service delivery in order to build upon a person's skills and experience gained in the military.

Supportive Services

- Establish trusting relationships with veterans in order to encourage them to reveal their needs and barriers.
- Engage a partner network, including funders, to help address needs comprehensively.





Financial Wellness

- Engage with one or more partners that can provide individual counseling and financial wellness classes customized for veterans.
- Use an online resource to supplement in-person or classroom instruction.

Career Pathways and Skills Attainment

- Know the in-demand jobs and career paths in your region and the companies most likely to hire veterans.
- Partner with community colleges and other training organizations to create

civilian skills training and credentialing opportunities.

- Help veterans understand what training and other benefits are available from the GI Bill and other veteran programs.

Employment Placement

- Leverage labor market data to connect veterans and military families to industries that are growing.
- Build and sustain positive employer relations by understanding their needs and creating an engagement retention process that builds trust.
- Support veterans as they build their civilian-friendly résumés using the skills and experience learned while in the military.
- Provide on-the-job training opportunities, internships and subsidized work experience for veterans who need additional job-readiness support.

Job Retention and Advancement

- Be systematic in how your team implements your follow-up and long-term support processes.

- Be creative with tools and motivational resources.
- Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer support and networking.

Community Partnerships

- Collaborate with partners that are aligned with your vision for veteran outcomes.
- Establish connections with nearby military bases.
- Co-enroll or leverage other resources for veterans enrolled in Goodwill programs.

Program Sustainability

- Cultivate your organization's commitment to sustaining veteran services.
- Plan for transitions of staff and partners.
- Identify program elements that will be sustained as funding sources and amounts change.
- Pursue alternative funding sources.

Recommendations for Policymakers

- Support organizations that work with veterans, service members and their families.
- Improve employment outcomes for veterans and military spouses by, among other initiatives, promoting occupational license portability across states, developing resources that match transferable skills from military occupations to civilian jobs, and encouraging education and training providers to recognize prior military experience and learning toward attainment of civilian credentials.
- Empower special veteran populations to achieve success through solutions that assist women veterans, those with service-connected disabilities or illness, and others who have specific barriers to successful employment.

