U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Veterans' Employment and Training
Washington, D.C. 20210

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VETERANS PROGRAM LETTER NO. 07-14

TO: ALL REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS
ALL REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

FROM: KEITH KELLY
Assistant Secretary
for Veterans' Employment and Training

SUBJECT: American Job Center (AJC) Participation in Capstone Activities and Other Outreach to Transitioning Service Members

I. Purpose. To inform VETS and ETA staff and the public workforce system of, and encourage workforce system participation in, the military services' Capstone activities and other outreach to provide employment services to Transitioning Service Members (TSMs), including eligible National Guard and Reserve members being separated or discharged from active duty.

II. References.

- VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, Title II of Public Law 112-56
- DD-2958, Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 20-13, Change 1, *Designation of Additional Population of Veterans Eligible for Services from the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist – Veterans Ages 18 to 24,* dated May 7, 2014. http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_20-13_Change1.pdf
- Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 04-14, *Designation of Additional Population of Veterans Eligible for Services from the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist – Veterans Ages 18 to 24,* dated April 10, 2014. http://www.dol.gov/vets/VMS/VPLs/VPL-04-14.pdf
- VPL 08-14, *Designation for Additional Populations Eligible for Services from Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists: Transitioning Service Members in need of Intensive Services; and Wounded, Ill, or Injured Service Members Receiving*

Treatment at Military Treatment Facilities or Warrior Transition Units (MTFs – WTUs); and the Spouses and Family Caregivers of such Wounded, Ill or Injured Service Members, dated September 22, 2014.
http://www.dol.gov/vets/VMS/VPLs/VPL-08-14.pdf

- Memorandum of Understanding Among the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Education, and Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard), the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, regarding the *Transition Assistance Program for Separating Service Members* (TAP MOU), of January 31, 2014. http://prhome.defense.gov/Portals/52/Documents/RFM/TVPO/files/TAP%20MOU%20Final%20January%2031,%202013.pdf
- TEGL 22-04, Change 1, *Serving Military Service Members and Military Spouses under the WIA Dislocated Worker Formula Grant,* signed September 28, 2007. http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL22-04c1acc.pdf
- Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, Public Law 113-76, Division H, Title I

III. **Background**. Section 221 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act amended 10 U.S.C. § 1144 to make participation in the Transition Assistance Program, including the DOL Employment Workshop (DOL EW), mandatory for members of the armed forces, including eligible National Guard and Reserve Component members, who are transitioning from active duty. The military services have also begun to implement Capstone, to verify that their members have met Career Readiness Standards (CRS) and made adequate preparations for their post-military careers before they leave active duty. As part of the Capstone process, unit commanders or their designees assess and verify each service member's readiness for transition to civilian employment. Commanders document the verification on form DD-2958, Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan, for each transitioning service member.

When a service member is assessed as not meeting Career Readiness Standards (e.g., if a member does not have an adequate civilian resume), their commander facilitates a "warm handover" of the member to the public workforce system for a review of the employment services available through American Job Centers (AJC) and to facilitate access to appropriate services. This warm handover is accomplished either through a person-to-person introduction to an AJC staff member at a Capstone session on-base, or through a call from the service member to the ETA Toll-Free Help Line (1-877-US2-JOBS or 1-877-872-5627). The ETA Toll-Free Help Line is prepared to assist service members by identifying and providing contact information for the AJC that is located closest to the base from which they are transitioning or to the community to which they will be transitioning, and to describe the services available through that AJC. Commanders document completion of the warm handover on the same form DD-2958, Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan that they used to assess the transitioning service member's career readiness. A blank DD-2958 is attached.

Aside from the specifics of the career readiness assessment and warm handover process, the workforce system should be aware that many TSMs could benefit from and are entitled to workforce system services, but may have limited ability to access such services at the AJC due to factors such as duty schedules or transportation logistics. The engagement of AJC staff in the Capstone sessions and the availability of AJC resources

and services, especially where they can be provided on-base or otherwise made readily accessible, can help TSMs to successfully transition to the civilian workforce once they conclude their active duty military service. This is particularly true for TSMs who are assessed by their commanders as not meeting Career Readiness Standards.

IV. **AJC Participation in Capstone**. Capstone activities are planned and implemented by local military base and appropriate commanders. The Department of Defense (DoD) and the military service branches expect that local commanders will coordinate their Capstone activity planning with AJC managers on at least a quarterly basis and invite AJC staff to participate in scheduled Capstone activities. AJCs are encouraged to participate by sending a staff member to Capstone activities.

Typically, a participating AJC staff member would meet with a group of TSMs to refresh information provided in the DOL EW regarding AJC services and how to access them. AJC staff could provide on-base services to service members who are assessed by their commanders as not being ready for transition to civilian employment, at the discretion of AJC managers, where it would be reasonably efficient to provide such services on-base rather than at the AJC. Participating AJC staff will not perform transition readiness assessments of individual service members or sign form DD-2958, Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan, as these actions are the responsibilities of the military services and the local commanders. While AJC participation in Capstone is strongly encouraged—on a par with support that would be provided civilian employees anticipating a layoff—it is not mandatory.

V. **Provision of AJC Services On-Base**. AJC managers are encouraged to coordinate with military commanders and with other agency partners within a local area to provide seamless services to TSMs to the extent practical, based on available resources and other AJC commitments.

AJC staff should encourage TSMs to access in-person and on-line services as appropriate. For example, a service member may opt to seek assistance in refining their resume from the AJC near their assigned base, but then register on-line with the workforce system in the state where they intend to relocate after leaving active military service. Service members may be similarly referred to an AJC near their base or prospective relocation site by their base or unit commanders or by the ETA Toll-Free Help Line.

AJCs are reminded that they may consider documentation that a service member will be released from active duty on a specific date as equivalent to a layoff notice for determining eligibility for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker Program (see TEGL 22-04). However, service members are not eligible for Priority of Service until they leave active duty.

Consistent with the TAP MOU, local installation commanders shall arrange for efficient access to the base and facility for any AJC staff they invite to participate in Capstone sessions or other on-base provision of workforce system services.

As TSMs are not yet veterans, AJC staff providing on or off-base services to TSMs—including AJC staff participating in Capstone activities—should be staff from AJC partner programs such as the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service or the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formula-funded programs, except in the following circumstances. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) may assist in coordinating AJC participation, such as by making arrangements for the provision of on-base services, but they may not provide direct services to TSMs. In addition, Public Law 113-76 permits Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists to serve TSMs identified as in need of intensive services through December 2014. VETS has identified three categories of TSMs as in need of intensive services, and therefore eligible to receive DVOP services under Public Law 113-76; while this authority is effective or during such time as it may be extended, DVOP specialists may provide intensive services to 1) TSMs who are 18-24 years old--consistent with TEGL 20-13 and VPL 04-14, which similarly designated 18-24 year old veterans as eligible for DVOP intensive services; 2) TSMs who have been identified as in need of intensive services because they were assessed as not meeting Career Readiness Standards, as documented on a TSM's DD-2958 and described in Section III above; and 3) active duty service members being involuntarily separated through a service reduction-in-force.

VI. **Veterans' Priority Resource Page**. In November 2013 the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), in partnership with the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), launched a new resource page for workforce practitioners. The resource page, available at http://veterans.workforce3one.org, is hosted on Workforce3One, ETA's on-line technical assistance and peer learning platform for workforce practitioners. The site is designed to assist American Job Center staff, as well as State Workforce Agency staff, in providing an easy to use source of information for the Department of Labor's veterans' employment and training programs. Included on this new resource page are:

- A list of relevant ETA guidance for serving veterans;
- Information on the Gold Card, a required item on form DD-2958 by which post-9/11 veterans are eligible for six months of intensive services after leaving active duty;
- A Priority of Service page, which includes important guidance and technical assistance;
- Online tools including: My Next Move for Veterans, the Veterans Reemployment Portal, the Career One-Stop Business Center, and the ebenefits Veterans' Employment Center;
- Announcements regarding veterans employment; and,
- A collection of useful links and resources for serving veterans.

ETA and VETS encourage all workforce practitioners to visit the site for updated tools and resources. Feedback on the site can be emailed to Vet.Priority@dol.gov.

VII. **Referrals to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resources**. AJC staff should encourage TSMs to create profiles on the ebenefits Veteran Employment Center (VEC) at https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs. The VEC consolidates access to the Veterans Job Bank and other services, programs, and tools.

AJC staff should advise TSMs that the VA provides educational and vocational counseling for all TSMs within six months prior to and for one year after discharge, and for other veterans eligible for or receiving a VA education benefit. These services support TSMs and veterans to help guide their career paths and ensure the most effective use of their VA benefits to achieve their education and career goals. More information on this VA counseling is available at http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOCREHAB/edu_voc_counseling.asp.

TSMs with service-connected disabilities should be encouraged to apply to the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program, which supports participants in job training, obtaining suitable careers and employment accommodations, and in starting businesses. More information on VR&E is available at http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp.

VIII. **Outreach Posters and Flyers**. The VA has developed outreach posters to inform veterans about the VA and DoD benefits and services they may have earned. AJCs are encouraged to display these posters, which have several different design options to reflect the local job seeker customer base of an AJC. VA has also developed materials on the VEC as well as a flyer on how to file an electronic Fully Developed Claim (FDC) for VA disability benefits. The posters and flyer are attached and are also available on the Workforce3One Veterans' Priority Resource web site described in section VI above.

IX. **Action Requested**.

A. State Workforce Agency (SWA) Administrators and AJC managers are requested to immediately transmit this VPL to appropriate staff for implementation.

B. Directors for Veterans' Employment and Training (DVETs) are to ensure, through coordination with ETA regional staff and the SWA, that AJC staff understand their respective roles in supporting TSMs as outlined in this VPL.

X. **Inquiries**. All inquiries should be directed to the appropriate VETS or ETA regional office, or Director for Veterans' Employment and Training.

XI. **Attachments**.

A. Blank copy of DD-2958, Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan

B. Copy of VA Outreach Materials