



# Career Technical Training Track | PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Transition Tools for a Brighter Future



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



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# Getting Started

## Overview

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to ensure you are able to rapidly connect to employment opportunities that align with your skills, interests, and goals. The Career Technical Training Track provides you with the information you need to plan for career success. By identifying the right training and upskilling opportunities for you, you are investing in yourself and in your future. Upskilling adds value to your resume, broadens your appeal in the workforce, and improves your economic mobility.

Now is the time to start positioning yourself for career success.

You may want to continue your career by working in the same field you worked in the military. Or, perhaps, you are looking to pursue new challenges or new opportunities. No matter what your goals are, you should ask yourself:

1. How will I accomplish them?
2. What steps do I need to take?

## Agenda

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- Assess career aptitude and interest
- Learn about industries, labor market research, career options, and upskilling opportunities
- Create a plan for success



## Activity—Where are you now?

Take five minutes and briefly write down your responses to these four questions.

1. What is your current occupation in the military?

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2. What types of jobs are you interested in?

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3. What are your strengths?

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4. What are your plans after separation or retirement (including state relocating to)?

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# Module 1: Assess

## Overview

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During this module, you will complete a self-assessment that is designed to measure your career aptitudes and interests. This assessment is designed to help you identify your career of choice. This tool is also useful for those of you who already know what you want to do—it can add another layer of understanding about what motivates you about career and work.

## Considerations for Selecting a Career

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- Skill requirements
- Interests
- Satisfaction
- Location
- Physical environment
- Pace (e.g., fast paced, steady and routine)
- Future demand
- Compensation (salary + benefits, bonus structure)

### Notes:



## Assessment Tools

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Information from career assessments can be invaluable in guiding you in choosing a career. They can add another layer of understanding about what motivates you. These assessments are good predictors of your career preferences. There are many different types of career assessments available; each can give you a different perspective about what you need, like, and prefer.

The CareerScope® self-assessment is designed to measure your aptitudes and interests. After you complete the assessment, you will use the results as well as other factors to identify potential career options.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in partnership with the Vocational Research Institute launched CareerScope®. CareerScope® will provide career recommendations that align with your interests and aptitudes.

CareerScope® enhances the career and educational planning process by measuring both interest and aptitude through valid and reliable assessment tasks. CareerScope® will identify your attraction to careers as they relate to the U.S. Department of Labor's Interest Areas. It measures aptitudes that are most critical for today's high growth and high replacement occupations through 2016.

It includes a 12-scale interest inventory and a seven-part aptitude battery.



The 12 interest areas are described in the table below.

Interest Area	Definition	Occupational Examples
01 Artistic	An interest in creative expression of feeling or ideas through literary arts, visual arts, performing arts, or crafts.	Writer, Painter, Actor, Editor, Dancer, Singer, Graphic Designer, Set Designer
02 Scientific	An interest in discovering, collecting, and analyzing information about the natural world and applying scientific research findings to problems in medicine, the life sciences, and the natural sciences.	Physician, Audiologist, Veterinarian, Biologist, Chemist, Speech Pathologist, Laboratory Technician
03 Plants/Animals	An interest in activities involving plants and animals, usually in an outdoor setting.	Gardener, Animal Groomer, Landscaper, Forester, Animal Caretaker
04 Protective	An interest in using authority to protect people and property.	Police Officer, Private Investigator, Security Guard, Bodyguard, Park Ranger, Correctional Officer
05 Mechanical	An interest in applying mechanical principles to practical situations using machines, hand-tools, or techniques to produce, build, or repair things.	Electrical Engineer, Architect, Carpenter, Chef, Mechanic, Ambulance Driver, Project Engineer, Computer Equipment Repairer
06 Industrial	An interest in repetitive, concrete, organized activities in a factory setting.	Machinist, Dry Cleaner, Baker, Welder, Laborer, Lathe Operator, Hand Packager
07 Business Detail	An interest in organized, clearly defined activities requiring accuracy and attention to details, primarily in an office setting.	Bill Collector, Secretary, Receptionist, Customer Service Representative, Health Information Technician
08 Selling	An interest in bringing others to a point of view by personal persuasion, using sales and promotional techniques.	Sales Representative, Stadium Vendor, Clothing Salesperson, Telephone Solicitor, Financial Planner, Travel Agent
09 Accommodating	An interest in catering to the wishes and needs of others, usually on a one-to-one basis, through hospitality and service work.	Manicurist, Restaurant Host, Waiter, Waitress, Personal Shopper, Flight Attendant
10 Humanitarian	An interest in helping individuals with their mental, social, spiritual, physical and vocational concerns, through medical or social services, therapy, or nursing.	Home Care Aide, Physical Therapist, Nurse, Medical Assistant, Child Care Worker, Dental Hygienist, Counselor, Probation Officer
11 Leading/Influencing	An interest in leading and influencing others by using high-level verbal or numerical abilities in business, education, research, or management positions.	Database Administrator, Paralegal, Teacher, Computer Engineer, Lawyer, Stock Broker, Computer Programmer
12 Physical Performing	An interest in physical activities performed before an audience, such as sports or daring physical feats.	Athlete, Coach, Movie Stunt Performer, Juggler, Sports Instructor



The seven aptitudes measured by CareerScope® are in the table below.

Aptitude	Definition	Specific Job Tasks	CareerScope®
General Learning G	The ability to “catch on” or understand instructions and underlying principles; ability to reason and make judgments. Closely related to doing well in school.  <u>Examples:</u> Use logic or scientific facts to define problems and draw conclusions; make decisions and judgments; plan and supervise the work of others.	Diagnose and treat illnesses or injuries; use facts to solve a crime; plan the layout of a computer network; inspect and test engine parts.	Pattern Visualization, Numerical Reasoning, Word Meanings
Verbal Aptitude V	The ability to understand the meaning of words and to use them effectively; ability to comprehend language, to understand relationships between words, and to understand the meanings of whole sentences and paragraphs.  <u>Examples:</u> Understand oral or written instructions or guidelines; understand and use training materials; use work-related reference materials.	Write a novel; interview guests on a radio talk show; edit newspaper articles for publication; write captions for magazine photos; take notes during class.	Word Meanings
Numerical Aptitude N	The ability to perform arithmetic operations quickly and accurately..  <u>Examples:</u> Make accurate numeric measurements; make change from currency; lay out geometric patterns.	Analyze statistical data; develop budgets for an organization; measure wall openings to fit and install windows; add lists of numbers.	Computation, Numerical Reasoning
Spatial Aptitude S	The ability to think visually of geometric forms and to comprehend the two- dimensional representation of three-dimensional objects; ability to recognize the relationships resulting from the movement of objects in space.  <u>Examples:</u> Lay out or position objects; observe and comprehend the movements of objects; understand the effects of physical stresses on objects.	Design layouts for new highway systems; create diagrams of wiring systems in buildings; use patterns to make clothing; operate a forklift; use a floor plan to find an office.	Pattern Visualization
Form Perception P	The ability to perceive detail in objects or in pictorial or graphic material; ability to make visual comparisons and discriminations and see slight differences in shapes and shadings of figures and widths and lengths of lines.  <u>Examples:</u> Inspect objects for flaws or scratches; determine whether patterns are the same; observe color, texture, and size of objects.	Examine and compare cells under a microscope; check temperature gauges on machinery; inspect parts on an assembly line; sort merchandise by size.	Object Identification, Abstract Shape Matching
Clerical Perception Q	The ability to perceive pertinent detail in verbal or tabular material; ability to observe differences in copy, to proofread words and numbers, and to avoid perceptual errors in arithmetic computation.  <u>Examples:</u> Check work orders and specifications for errors.	Proofread manuscripts for typographical errors; keep inventory records; sort mail according to zip code; operate a cash register.	Clerical Matching
Manual Dexterity M	The ability to move the hands easily and skillfully; ability to work with the hands in placing and turning motions.  <u>Examples:</u> Move, stack, turn, or place objects; make coordinated movements of the arms and hands.	Stack bricks to construct a wall; pack oranges into crates; position dolls in a toy store window display.	CareerScope does not directly measure this. However, based upon your use of the computer mouse, it is assumed that your scores are at least average.



## Activity—CareerScope® Assessment

1. To access CareerScope®, go to the CareerScope® webpage: [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/careerscope.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/careerscope.asp)

**Note:** You can also access CareerScope® through the GI Bill® Comparison Tool: <http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool>.

2. You should see in the center of the page, four blue boxes that read “2+ Years of College: Exploring Careers, 2+ Years of College: Have Career Plans, Less Than 2 Years of College: Exploring Careers, and Less Than 2 Years of College: Have Career Plans.”
3. Click on the appropriate box that matches your current level of academic achievement and where you currently are regarding your career plans, (your browser will now redirect you to the CareerScope® Post-9/11 GI Bill® Assessment Portal).
4. To enter “CareerScope®”, click on the “Click Here to Enter the Assessment Portal.” You can either sign into CareerScope® if you have already created a user ID and password. If you have not registered, click on the “New Evaluatees Register Here” link.
5. Once you have registered, you will watch a short video that provides an overview of CareerScope®.
6. After clicking the “Next” button, you will go through a “speed trial.” After completing the speed trial, you will be given a few practice items to orient you to how CareerScope® works.
7. Be sure to read the messages in the message center. You can initiate testing by clicking on the green “START” button. After the time expires for each task, you will be given the option of immediately initiating the next assessment task or resting for 90 seconds. At the end of 90 seconds, the program will automatically launch the next task.

### Review the Results

Now that you have completed the CareerScope® assessment and printed your report, it is time to review your results in your CareerScope® Assessment Profile. This report is an essential starting point for your career or educational planning process. The CareerScope® Assessment Profile provides easy-to-understand score displays, graphs and explanations, as well as career recommendations that focus upon your aptitude and interest profiles.

The first part of the Assessment Profile presents a table and a graph of your Interest Results. Part two reports and displays your Aptitude Results as standard scores and as percentile scores. Part three provides Recommendations based upon the overlap of your high interest and high ability areas. These recommendations can be presented in GOE/DOT or O\*NET format.

Part one displays the Interest results. Occupations have been divided into 12 Interest Areas based upon the type of activities workers perform. The CareerScope® Interest Inventory includes a series of work activity statements drawn from these 12 Interest Areas.



Your interest area scores are determined based on the criteria below.

- Interest Area scale response frequencies (“Like,” “Unsure,” and “Dislike”) based upon the Interest Inventory statements.
- The percentage of other people in comparative norm groups (total/male/female) who gave fewer “Like” responses than you.
- The percentage of “Like” responses recorded within each of the 12 Interest areas.
- The Individual Profile Analysis (IPA) reports your high interest areas in rank order.
- The dark vertical line in the chart represents your average percentage of “Like” responses across all 12 Interest Areas.

The Interest Area Legend provides definitions and occupational examples for each of the 12 Interest Areas.

Part two of the report contain the Aptitude Results. The 12 Interest Areas have been divided into Work Groups, which are based upon minimum aptitude score requirements.

The first section of the Aptitude Assessment report presents the number of correct answers and the total number of items attempted within each of the assessment tasks.

The second section of the Aptitude Assessment report, the Aptitude Profile, converts and weights the seven task raw scores into six cognitive and perceptual aptitude scores.

The scores are presented in standard score format. A standard score of 100 is exactly average. Scores between 80 and 120 can be thought of as “in the average range.”

The percentile scores report the percentage of people who scored below you. A percentile score of 50 indicates that 50 percent of the appropriate comparison group achieved a lower score.

**Note:** A percentile score of 50 is equivalent to a standardized score of 100.

The developmental standard is used to establish your score results.

An Aptitude Profile may include Motor Coordination, Finger Dexterity and Manual Dexterity scores. Scores automatically reflect a standard score of 100 (50th percentile score) unless other information is manually input.

The Aptitude Legend provides definitions of all Aptitudes, gives examples of specific job tasks that require them, and lists the CareerScope® tasks that measure them.

Part three of the report contains the Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE) and Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) recommendations.



### GOE/DOT Recommendations

The GOE/DOT subdivides the 12 Interest Areas into Work Groups. Occupations that belong to the same Work Group require similar interests and similar aptitudes. CareerScope® recommendations focus upon Work Groups where your high interest and high aptitude areas overlap.

### O\*NET Recommendations

The O\*NET recommendation report includes occupational units (OUs) that are related to your interest and aptitude profile. These are high growth/high replacement rate occupational units which are drawn from the O\*NET database.

The OU Titles are listed along with OU Numbers. An OU is a cluster of related positions/occupations that share similar educational and skill training requirements.

Note: If your report does not include recommendations, it could be that there is no overlap between your high interest and high aptitude areas. In this case, please contact the VA to utilize the Chapter 36 Educational and Career Counseling benefit. This service is provided to transitioning Servicemembers and beneficiaries using the GI Bill®. To apply for free counseling services please complete and return the form located here.

Please refer to your CareerScope® report and think about your answers to the following questions:

1. What are your thoughts about the results after completing the assessment?

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2. What relevant interests and aptitudes did you identify to pursue a particular career path?

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3. How will you use the assessment results? Which results surprised you?

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4. Write down a few of the recommended career options that interest you.

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### O\*Net Interest Profiler

The O\*NET Interest Profiler can help you find out what your interests are and how those interests relate to the world of work; you can find out what you like to do. The O\*NET Interest Profiler helps you decide what kinds of careers you may want to explore. The purpose of this activity is to:

- Learn the relationship between interests and level of preparation on job choices
- Learn the O\*NET site as a resource to find knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) for your proposed career of choice
- Use this data to conduct a self-assessment

Wherever you are with your level of career choice, this assessment can have value for you. If you are resolute in your choice, your results may confirm what you already know; they can refine your understanding of it—or possibly present you with some new perspectives you had not considered.

1. Open the following site: [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov).

Click on the “Employment Center” tab and you will see the “Interest Profiler” link on the left side of the page under “Resources”. Click on the link to take you to the homepage for the O\*Net Interest Profiler on My Next Move.

2. Read each question carefully and decide how you would feel about doing each type of work:
- Strongly Dislike



- Dislike
- Unsure
- Like
- Strongly Like

As you answer the questions, try NOT to think about whether you have enough education or training to do the work or how much money you would make doing the work.

Just think about whether you would like or dislike doing the work.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Please take your time answering the questions. There is no need to rush. You are learning about your interests, so you can explore work you might like and find rewarding.

3. On each screen, click the "Next" button at the bottom to continue. You can use the "Back" button at the bottom to re-read the instructions or change your answers. Once you finish answering all 60 questions, you should be at the "Great Job" screen.
4. Click "Next" to proceed to your Interest Profiler results. Your results will be ranked across six interest categories; write down your scores for future reference:

Category	Score	Category	Score
Realistic		Social	
Investigative		Enterprising	
Artistic		Conventional	



## Interest Categories Definitions

<p>People with <b>Realistic</b> interests like work that includes practical, hands-on problems and answers. Often people with Realistic interests do not like careers that involve paperwork or working closely with others. They like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with plants and animals</li> <li>• Real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery</li> <li>• Outside work</li> </ul>	<p>People with Social interests like working with others to help them learn and grow. They like working with people more than working with objects, machines, or information. They like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Giving advice</li> <li>• Helping and being of service to people</li> </ul>
<p>People with <b>Investigative</b> interests like work that has to do with ideas and thinking rather than physical activity or leading people. They like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searching for facts</li> <li>• Figuring out problems</li> </ul>	<p>People with <b>Enterprising</b> interests like work that has to do with starting up and carrying out business projects. These people like taking action rather than thinking about things. They like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persuading and leading people</li> <li>• Making decisions</li> <li>• Taking risks for profits</li> </ul>
<p>People with <b>Artistic</b> interests like work that deals with the artistic side of things, such as acting, music, art, and design. They like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity in their work</li> <li>• Work that can be done without following a set of rules</li> </ul>	<p>People with <b>Conventional</b> interests like work that follows set procedures and routines. They prefer working with information and paying attention to details rather than working with ideas. They like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with clear rules</li> <li>• Following a strong leader</li> </ul>

Different careers need different amounts of preparation. You will be asked to pick a Job Zone. Using your Job Zone and your interests, the Interest Profiler will help you identify and explore careers that might be right for you.

Each O\*NET career is in one of five (5) Job Zones, which group careers that need the same level of experience, education, and training. The five (5) Job Zones are:

- **Job Zone 1: Little or no preparation**

*Occupations may require a high school diploma or GED certificate*

- **Job Zone 2: Some preparation**

*Occupations usually require a high school diploma*



- **Job Zone 3: Medium preparation**

*Most occupations require training in vocational schools, related on-the-job experience, or an associate's degree*

- **Job Zone 4: Considerable preparation**

*Most of these occupations require a four-year bachelor's degree, but some may not require the degree*

- **Job Zone 5: Extensive preparation**

*Occupations require graduate school, e.g., Masters, J.D., or Ph.D.*

From the last point you were in the Interest Profiler, select "Next" when directed. From this point, select potential occupations of interest that fall under Job Zones 2 and 3.

**Job Zone 2 Occupations** (Some previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed. Employees in these occupations need anywhere from a few months to one year of working with experienced employees)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Zone 3 Occupations** (Previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is required for these occupations. Most occupations in this zone require training in career technical training programs, related on-the-job experience, or an associate's degree.)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



You may have found the Interest Profiler results to be surprising, or perhaps the results verified what you already knew about your desired career pursuits. Take some time to review the results:

Answer the questions about the interest profile individually and write your responses below. Then, discuss your answers with a colleague.

1. What did you find out?

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2. Were there any surprises?

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3. Were you able to answer the questions on the interest profiler?

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4. Which questions did you struggle with?

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## Education and Career Counseling (Chapter 36)

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[www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu\\_voc\\_counseling.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu_voc_counseling.asp)

There are additional tools available to assist you with career exploration.

VA provides education and career counseling through the Chapter 36 program to Servicemembers, Veterans, and current VA education beneficiaries at no charge (under USC Title 38, Section 3697). These counseling services are designed to help individuals choose a vocational direction, determine the course needed to achieve the chosen goal, and evaluate the career possibilities open to them. These services are provided under the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program.

Assistance may include testing interest and aptitude, exploring occupations, setting occupational goals, locating the right type of training program, and exploring educational or training facilities that can be utilized to achieve an occupational goal.

Counseling services include but are not limited to education and career counseling and guidance; testing; analysis of and recommendations to improve job-marketing skills; identification of employment, training, and financial aid resources; and referrals to other agencies providing these services.

Education and career counseling services are available for individuals on active duty, if they are within 180 days of their estimated discharge date or release from active duty. The projected discharge must be under conditions other than dishonorable.

Veterans are eligible if not more than one year has lapsed since the date they were discharged or released from active duty. Also, individuals who are eligible for VA education benefits may receive education and career counseling at any time during their eligibility period.

## Skills Translator

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In the Veteran Employment Center™, you can use the Skills Translator to translate your military skills to civilian skills, which will allow employers to see your skills and abilities in their language, and not that of the military. Once you have translated your skills, and you are ready to build your profile in the VEC™, your skills are automatically transferred to your profile.

You can also use the Skills Translator to do additional career exploration and local labor market research, which we will discuss further in Module 3.

### Notes:



## Module 2: Learn

### Overview

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Based upon your CareerScope® results and recommendations, you can begin to explore the industries and careers that interest you most. Once you begin to focus on a particular career, you can select the training opportunities that will align with your career goals. It is important to explore the various training options as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each. Things to consider include the length of the training program, and transferability of skills.

### Labor Market Research

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This section is organized by industry research, career exploration, and local labor market research to guide attendees through a national understanding of leading trends by industry. Followed by an understanding of growing careers within these industries. And finally how these industries and careers relate to specific geographies.

### Key Terms

Labor Supply: Availability of suitable human resources in a particular labor market. Encompasses all the information regarding individuals in the workforce, including skills and educational characteristics of the employed and unemployed, barriers to employment, and unemployment rates.

Labor Demand: The need for employees and workers in a particular job market such as construction or manufacturing. Pertains to information regarding employers, including prevailing wages and benefits, current job vacancy levels, occupations and skills of the employed, and unfulfilled skill needs of employers.

Labor Market: The nominal market in which workers find paying work, employers find willing workers, and wages are determined. The supply of available workers with reference to the demand for them.

Labor Market Information: Provides information on the overall structure and condition of the labor market, including data related to wages/benefits, unemployment rate, skill requirements, career information, projections, demographics, geography, company downsizing/expansion, job opportunities, industry trends, demand, and growth.

As you begin your research, you should keep these terms in mind. These will be a driving force in your career selection.



One resource for labor market information is the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. This website offers a wealth of resources, including links to American Job Centers, Career One Stop, Service Locator, and more. To visit this website, go to [www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov).

Another resource that provides extensive labor market information and can help you answer those questions is the Veterans Employment Center™ (VEC™) website which is the federal government’s single authoritative internet source for connecting transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families to meaningful career opportunities. The VEC™ is the first government-wide product that brings together a reputable cadre of public and private employers with real job opportunities and provides transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families with the tools to translate military skills into plain language and build a profile or brand that can be shared – in real time – with employers who have made a public commitment to hire Veterans. Your brand will be equally valuable if you choose an entrepreneurial path.

We will now use the VEC™ to perform industry research, explore careers, and examine local job opportunities. To visit the VEC™, go to <https://www.vets.gov/veterans-employment-center>.

**Industry Research**

Industry research is important for helping you better understand the field you would like to enter. Knowing about the industry’s landscape, including its challenges and opportunities, will empower you to make good career decisions. Industry research is essential to business start-up decisions.

Questions you should consider when performing industry research include:

- 1. What are the fastest growing industries?

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- 2. What are the industries with the largest employment?

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3. What are the industries with declining employment?

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4. What are the highest paying industries?

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Visit [www.careeronestop.org/explorecareers/learn/research-industries.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/explorecareers/learn/research-industries.aspx) and explore an industry that interests you, taking note of answers to the questions above.

### Career Exploration

Once you've chosen an industry, you should consider the different career options within that industry. Think about the skills, education, and training required for different careers in that industry and how those align with your individual assessment results.

The MyNextMove database, which you can access through the VEC™ in the eBenefits web portal, enables you to conduct labor market research, including Bright Outlook careers, occupational skills and training requirements, national and state wages, and careers that are in demand.

Take a look at the site to give you an idea of how this resource can be useful. Go through the VEC™ and identify possible careers that may fit your needs.

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____



## Activity—Researching Labor Market Information

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### Steps to Explore Careers using an Occupation Search

1. Navigate to <http://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/explore-careers.aspx>
2. Enter the name of your career of choice or one of your top three (3) choices from your self-assessment results in the “Occupation Profile Search” section.
3. Enter the location by “State” then hit the search button.
4. The results open the Occupation Profile page where you will be able to locate key information on this occupation.
5. Write down notes in the provided tables about each of the three occupations provided on pages 21 through 23 in your Participant Guide. You can refer to the sample page on page 20 for guidance on completing the tables.
6. Take particular note of the training requirements for the occupation (e.g., Pre-Requisite training required? Training location- accredited and VA approved program? What is the length of training (six (6) months, 18 months, or two (2) years)? This information is crucial as you evaluate programs within your budget constraints.
7. You can explore additional resources by using the “explore careers at a glance” which is located at the bottom of this screen.
8. Additional information can also be found using the MyNextMove website at <http://www.mynextmove.org/>





Occupation 1

<b>Occupation / Title:</b>		
<b>Knowledge:</b>	<b>Skills:</b>	<b>Abilities:</b>
<b>Personality:</b>		<b>Technology:</b>
<b>Education/Training:</b> Training/experience required:  Training location(s):  Length of training:  Credential:  Apprenticeship? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Job Outlook:</b> Bright Outlook? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Green Job? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Salary (Average):</b>		
National: \$		State (    ): \$



Occupation 2

<b>Occupation / Title:</b>		
<b>Knowledge:</b>	<b>Skills:</b>	<b>Abilities:</b>
<b>Personality:</b>		<b>Technology:</b>
<b>Education/Training:</b>		<b>Job Outlook:</b>
Training/experience required:		Bright Outlook? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Training location(s):		Green Job? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Length of training:		
Credential:		
Apprenticeship? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Salary (Average):</b>		
National: \$		State (    ): \$



Occupation 3

<b>Occupation / Title:</b>		
<b>Knowledge:</b>	<b>Skills:</b>	<b>Abilities:</b>
<b>Personality:</b>		<b>Technology:</b>
<b>Education/Training:</b> Training/experience required:  Training location(s):  Length of training:  Credential:  Apprenticeship? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Job Outlook:</b> Bright Outlook? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Green Job? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Salary (Average):</b>		
National: \$		State (   ): \$



## Jobs and Geographies

Once you've identified three careers that sound interesting to you, you can use the VEC™ to locate jobs in specific locations, in both the public and private sectors. Remember that not all jobs are available everywhere. Some locations have higher demand for specific industries, which you should have identified during your industry research.

There are many resources available to you to help you better understand the opportunities in your local area. There are national search engines, such as [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com), which provide information about local companies, salaries, and available jobs. Additionally, your state's employment office usually has an individual who works directly with Veterans and their employment needs; please contact your local office to be connected to this individual.

Explore some job opportunities through the VEC™. In the VEC™, use the Job Search tool to search the Veterans Job Bank. You can search by keyword or job title, location, or military job title or code. Perform a search using the three occupations you identified during career exploration. Take a look at the search results. Jobs are listed by public or private and will also show the location for the position. You can click on the position to see the job descriptions and qualifications.

As you explore, ask yourself these two questions:

- Am I ready to apply for the job?
- Do I still require training before applying for the job?

There are additional labor market resources in Appendix A of this Participant Guide.

### Notes:

## Upskilling

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Now that you've identified some specific job opportunities, you may have realized that you need additional education, credentials, or just a refinement of skills to pursue the job of your choice. Upskilling may be useful in starting your own business if you need skills and certifications to enhance your brand. Upskilling means improving your skills and knowledge to enhance your career outlook. One of the fastest ways to upskill is through training and education. There are various ways to obtain training, such as career



schools or community colleges, as well as many ways to demonstrate your qualifications, such as licenses and certifications. Now, we will look at some of the upskilling options available to you.

The GI Bill® program can be used for many of the types of training we will discuss below, including:

- Correspondence training
- Cooperative training
- Entrepreneurship training
- Independent and distance learning
- Institutions of higher learning undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Licensing and certification reimbursement
- Vocational/technical training, non-college degree programs
- National testing reimbursement
- On-the-job training
- Tuition assistance top-up
- Tutorial assistance
- Vocational/technical training and apprenticeships

Those pursuing on-the-job training or apprenticeships may be eligible for additional Post-9/11 GI Bill® benefits, including monthly housing allowance, and books and supplies stipend. The payment rate for Monthly Housing Allowance is as follows:

- 100 percent of applicable MHA during first six months of training
- 80 percent of applicable MHA during second six months of training
- 60 percent of applicable MHA during third six months of training
- 40 percent of applicable MHA during fourth six months of training
- 20 percent of applicable MHA during remainder of training

Post-9/11 GI Bill® recipients will also receive up to \$83/month for books and supplies.

For more information on enrolling in an apprenticeship or on-the-job training, refer to [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob\\_apprenticeship.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp) or call 1-888-GI BILL 1 (1-888-442-4551).

### Private Career Schools

Career schools emphasize skills and knowledge required for a particular job function (such as typing or data entry) or a trade (such as carpentry or welding). Career schools offer education for employment—



courses and programs that teach specific knowledge and skills leading to particular jobs. When you look at the GI Bill® website, you will see these are called Non-College Degree programs. The attractive features of career technical schools include:

- Learning is hands on; you immediately use what you learn
- Students get training and enter the workforce quickly
- Instructors have personal experience in the subjects they teach

For more information, visit [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0241-choosing-vocational-school](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0241-choosing-vocational-school).

Career schools offer certificates for professional technical subjects. The first technical colleges offered degrees and certificates in subjects such as computer hardware maintenance and electronics, construction trades (e.g., welding and pipefitting), nursing, and criminal justice. Now, they include a wider array of subjects such as culinary arts, bartending, travel, and real estate and schools that offer technical degrees and certifications in healthcare, graphic design, and engineering but continue to focus on professional technical needs.

Career schools offer more specific and specialized job preparation, often in a shorter timeframe. These timeframes vary from a few months to two years, depending on the program type and course load. After completion of a program, students receive a certificate. Credits may not transfer to a college program.

Some students may do better in a career school where they will be put straight into a real-world environment, learning hands-on skills, while maintaining an interest in interactive school work.

Attending a career school has many advantages, especially if you have already identified your ideal career and are eager to start. From saving time to getting hands-on training and real-world experience, this could be the place for you.

Pros:

- Immediate hands-on training, real-world experiences, and career placement assistance
- Specialized programs that prepare students for a specific trade or industry
- Tuition may include everything a student will need throughout the length of the program, like books, miscellaneous fees, lab tools, and any other necessary supplies
- Can be completed in less than two years
- Most technical colleges are year-round, allowing you to complete training more quickly
- Most technical colleges start classes more frequently than community colleges, which have traditional starting times: summer, fall, and winter
- Smaller class sizes and limited enrollment allow for one-on-one attention from instructors



- Offers unique and flexible opportunities for working students and students with families
- Training in a specific field may allow a student to bypass taking general education classes
- Most instructors are highly skilled, experienced, and connected in the fields they teach, offering a wealth of knowledge
- Career service advisors on staff at technical colleges are available to assist students in searching for employment after graduation
- Externships are often included in the technical college programs, which offer valuable, real-world experience to students. Characteristics include:
  - They vary in length, but usually last one or two days
  - They generally involve shadowing a professional through a normal day's activities, and may include informational interviews, a tour of the facility, and participation in actual office projects, etc
  - They prepare students for industry certifications in the specific field of study

Cons:

- While most career school programs are accredited, not many allow the credits you earn to be transferred to other technical, community, or four-year colleges
- Tuition at a career school is usually more expensive than the tuition at a community college
- If you really want those general education courses and the option for an advanced degree, you may want to consider other options

### Public Community Colleges and Technical Colleges

Although many community colleges are now expanding their curriculum to offer both shorter-term and longer-term programs, they are traditionally two-year institutions. There is not always a clear-cut distinction between community colleges and publicly funded technical colleges, but technical colleges often focus on shorter-term programs. Community colleges, in contrast, are often the place where many students acquire the basic university elective requirements, such as humanities, math, arts, etc. After completing their program, at either a community or technical college, students will get a certificate or an associate's degree.

Community college is a great option for those who want to further their education close to home and explore future four-year college opportunities.

There are a lot of benefits to attending a community or technical college. From convenience to affordability, community colleges are great for students who want a more traditional setting for learning with the option to further their education, while technical colleges offer focused training at an affordable price that leads directly to the workforce.



#### Pros:

- Convenient 2-year programs that will earn you an associate's or liberal arts degree
- Convenient 1-year and 2-year programs that will earn you a certificate leading directly into a career field
- Lower tuition due to public tax dollars at local, state, and federal levels
- Greater ability to transfer credits to a 4-year college or university and save money in the process
- More programs to choose from
- Time to explore different career fields before choosing a major
- Chance to improve your GPA to meet admissions requirements for a 4-year college
- Generally, all students are accepted, regardless of past academic performance
- Often located in the middle of the city, which allows for easy access to public transportation and urban amenities
- Schedule to fit the unique lifestyles of working students and students with families

#### Cons:

- While tuition tends to be cheaper than career schools, it usually only includes tuition and fees, requiring students to pay out-of-pocket for books and all other required supplies
- Curriculum at community colleges may be equal parts lecture and hands-on training
- Depending on the program, students may need to spend time and money on lectures and general education courses, whether they want to or not

### Earning Credentials

Credentials can be earned at:

- Two-year community and junior colleges
  - Offer two-year associate degrees
  - Formal certificate programs
- Career, technical, vocational, or trade schools
  - Offer specific career training
  - Typically last two (2) years or less
- Four-year colleges and universities
  - Offer many certificate programs
  - Vary widely in length and complexity



## Why is credentialing important?

- May be required by law or by an employer for entry into employment
- Demonstrates to civilian employers that training and skills achieved in the military are on par with those gained through traditional civilian pathways
- Ensures licensed employees share a common understanding of the best practices for their industry
- Can lead to higher pay or promotion

### Notes:

## Common Credentials

### Licensure

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing\\_certification.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing_certification.asp)

Licensure is a mandatory process by which a governmental agency grants time-limited permission to an individual to engage in a given occupation after verifying he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria and offers title protection for those who meet the criteria.

There is typically a minimum level of education and a competency exam that must be passed to be licensed. If an occupation is licensed, you must have the license in order to attain employment. Some states recognize licenses from other states, while others do not.

### Certification

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing\\_certification.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing_certification.asp)

A certification is a voluntary credential issued by a certification body, such as associations (for example, the National Commission for Certification of Crane Operators) and some private sector companies (for example, Novell Certified Engineer), based on an individual demonstrating through an examination process that he or she has acquired the designated knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform a specific job. The examination can be either written, oral, or performance-based. Certification is a time-limited credential that is renewed through a recertification process.

Some state licensure boards and some employers may require certifications as well for a particular career field. For some occupations, you may have to obtain several certifications to obtain a license. Additionally, certifications make you more competitive and may even increase your salary.



Note that certifications are distinct from educational certificates, which are awarded by an educational institution based on completion of all requirements for a program of study, including coursework and test or other performance evaluations, similar to a degree.

### Certificate

You can get a certificate after attending a training class that only lasted a day, but you are highly unlikely to become certified in the subject of that class. When you receive a certificate, it is for attendance and not for demonstrating knowledge or competence. You can also earn a certificate from an educational institution after completing a program of study that prepares you to enter the workforce.

**Coursera** is an educational platform providing courses in a wide variety of disciplines from accredited schools and institutions worldwide, including but not limited to information technology, business and management, and education. All course material is available at no cost, and additionally, Coursera provides all Veterans with one free verified certificate upon completion of any Coursera course.

A Verified Certificate is a convenient way to demonstrate course completion, build your professional qualifications, and advance your education and career. These certificates may help improve employability skills in high-demand fields such as data science, cybersecurity, health care, and entrepreneurship. Transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans can access this opportunity online through <http://blog.coursera.org/veterans>.

VA Learning Hubs are a blended learning approach that establishes a physical network of space, facilitators, and students worldwide. Learning Hubs give you an opportunity to build your skills through a combination of online classes and in-person sessions. Each VA Learning Hub focuses on select Coursera courses. VA Learning Hubs enhance your learning experience and may include networking opportunities, discussions on course material, guest speakers, and Q&A opportunities with experts from the community. To learn more about VA Learning Hubs, email [VeteranEmployment.vbaco@va.gov](mailto:VeteranEmployment.vbaco@va.gov) with the subject line "Learning Hub."

### Notes:



## Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. Apprenticeship programs are most common in the skilled trades, such as when becoming an electrician.

Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and/or employer associations. Apprenticeships are required for many technical careers.

### Pros:

- A prevailing benefit to an apprenticeship is it may be registered and provide opportunities for workers to seek high-skilled-high paying jobs; employers are able to build a qualified workforce. This program is a leader that prepares American workers to compete in a global economy.
- Earn a paycheck: may increase with time as you learn new skills
- Hands-on career training: you'll receive practical OJT in a wide selection of program, such as healthcare, construction, information technology and geospatial technology
- An education: hands-on training with the potential to earn college credit, an associate or bachelor's degree; may be paid for your employer
- A career: once you're complete, you're on your way to a successful long-term career with a competitive salary and little or no educational debt
- National industry certification: when you complete the program you'll most likely be certified and can take the certification exam in any state; you may want to check with your local state agency for additional qualifications or certifications
- Recognizable partners: many of the nation's most recognized companies have Registered Apprenticeship programs

### Cons:

- Apprenticeships are highly regulated by states, the federal government, and organizations that sponsor them. These regulations cover pay rates for apprentices, working conditions, and quality of instruction. Of course, with regulation there may be some negatives to include age limits, as well as no guarantee of permanent employment after the apprenticeship; however, you may receive a paycheck when completing the apprenticeship.

To see available apprenticeships, visit [www.dol.gov/apprenticeship](http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship).

Registered apprenticeships are a unique, flexible training system combining job-related technical instruction with structured on-the-job learning experiences. This system provides the opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high-paying jobs and for employers seeking to build a qualified workforce.



As you can see on the website, you can enroll in a registered apprenticeship on this site; view other people's success stories, search for apprenticeship programs by state, and much more.

Look through the site to see if there is an apprenticeship for your career of choice. Be sure to take notes on information you find that may be useful to you.

Additional information about apprenticeships can be found at the following sites:

- [www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS](http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS)
- [www.doleta.gov/oa/apprentices.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/oa/apprentices.cfm)
- [www.doleta.gov/OA/apprenticeship.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/OA/apprenticeship.cfm)
- [www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm)
- <https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/page/home>
- <https://doleta.gov/oa/veterans.cfm>

The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program is a formal military training program that provides active duty Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy service members the opportunity to improve their job skills and to complete their civilian apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty.

#### **Notes:**

#### Union versus Non-Union Apprenticeships

When selecting an apprenticeship program, it is important you are aware of the differences between union and non-union apprenticeships. Each path comes with its own type of working styles and benefits. Union-sponsored programs may only provide work in union positions and union contracts. Non-union programs will allow you to take non-union positions and contracts.

The gaps between union and non-union contractors may have closed somewhat, but important differences remain. The main points of distinction appear in the areas of location, training, compensation, and workforce flexibility.

Union workers have long laid claim to being the most thoroughly trained workers in the business. The common denominator for union training programs is that they are an intensive training program combining classroom work with supervised on-the-job training.



Non-union training may be just as good. However, when taking an apprentice position, you want to make sure the contractor or company you will be working for provides you quality training to give you the career skills you need for the long term. Make sure you get what you want out of your apprenticeship and it is in line with what the company wants to provide. Do not be afraid to ask questions.

Union workers often enjoy a guaranteed minimum wage or salary, even if they change shops, and may also receive other union benefits like insurance for them and their families. However, union membership requires dues, which can be significant. Also, union jobs may pay less than non-union jobs—particularly if there are more union workers than work in your area. Moreover, there may be a good supply of non-union work that union workers cannot touch if they want to maintain good union standing.

For many contractors, one of the most valuable aspects of hiring union workers is being able to hire from a pool of trained and qualified workers to supplement their workforce. Selecting workers through the union ensures a base level of capability.

### **On-the-Job Training**

On-the-job training (OJT) focuses on the acquisition of skills within the work environment generally under normal working conditions. Through OJT, workers acquire both general skills they can transfer from one job to another and specific skills unique to a particular job. OJT typically includes oral and written instruction, demonstration and observation, and hands-on practice and imitation.

OJT can get job seekers back to work and train them to meet employer needs. This also allows people to continue to draw a paycheck while learning new skills. Both employees and employers see the benefit from day one. OJT programs can involve as little as a day of informal training or several weeks or months of formal training and testing.

In OJT programs, employers often provide structured hands-on experience and peer or supervisor mentoring and training prior to an employee assuming the responsibilities of the job. Common OJT programs include a mix of hands-on practical training combined with formal training.

Some OJT programs may require employer-mandated formal testing for program completion while others do not.

A wonderful resource for OJT opportunities is Workforce3One which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. It is an e-learning, knowledge sharing web space that offers workforce professionals, employers, economic development professionals, and education professionals a dynamic network featuring innovative workforce solutions. Online learning events, resource information, and tools help organizations learn how to develop strategies that enable individuals and businesses to be successful in the 21st century economy.



#### Pros:

- Employment—you have a paying job while you learn your position
- Low cost—does not require the development of potentially expensive training materials or classroom cost; does not require the development of potentially expensive computer-based instruction; promotes employment opportunities
- Task based—OJT is performed at the work area, so training tends to be focused on performing real job tasks
- Well suited for small groups—OJT is often the most practical training method when you only need to train 1 to 2 employees at a time

#### Cons:

- Inconsistent—traditional OJT relies heavily on an experienced employee to provide the instruction based on what they feel is most important; what is important to one employee may not be important to another, which leads to unpredictable learning depending on who the trainer is
- Incomplete—without a structured lesson guide, OJT trainers may forget to cover critical information; what is learned is likely to be based on what happened that day rather than on what a new employee needs to know to be safe and productive
- Lack of foundational principles—while the hands-on aspect of OJT may appeal to the practical learner, often the underlying theories of operation are not covered in sufficient detail or accuracy; without this foundation of knowledge, trainees often learn what to do, not why they are doing it, resulting in poor decision making when things don't go exactly right

#### DoD SkillBridge

The Department of Defense SkillBridge offers Servicemembers with certain qualifications the opportunity to participate in civilian job and employment training that offers a high probability of employment, including apprenticeships and internships. Training for these positions can take place starting up to six months prior to a Servicemember's separation. Industry training providers offer training at little or no cost to eligible Servicemembers on or near the installations where they are stationed for the closing months of their military careers. To apply for this opportunity, please visit [www.dodskillbridge.com](http://www.dodskillbridge.com).

#### Internships

An internship is a temporary position that emphasizes on-the-job training rather than merely employment, and it can be paid or unpaid. There are many public and private agencies that provide internship opportunities and an online search can yield many opportunities. Two places to search based upon your interest and location, include:

- USAJOBS Pathways: [www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads](http://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads) or <https://www.usajobs.gov/Search?Internship=Yes>
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce: [www.uschamber.com/about-us/careers/internship-opportunities](http://www.uschamber.com/about-us/careers/internship-opportunities)



## VA Work Study Program

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp)

This program provides part-time employment to students receiving VA education benefits who attend school three-quarter time or more. The student may work at the school Veterans' office, VA Medical Facilities, VA Regional Office, or at approved state employment offices. Active duty military are not eligible for this program.

VA selects students for work-study based on different factors. Such factors include:

- The ability of the student to complete the work-study contract before the end of his or her eligibility to education benefits, and
- Job availability within normal commuting distance to the student.

The number of applicants selected will depend on the availability of VA-related work at your school or at VA facilities in your area. Veterans with service-connected disabilities of at least 30 percent may be given priority consideration.

You will earn an hourly wage equal to the federal minimum wage or your state minimum wage, whichever is greater. If you are in a work-study job at a college or university, your school may pay you the difference between the amount VA pays and the amount the school normally pays other work-study students doing the same job.

To apply, you must complete VA Form 22-8691, Application for Work-Study Allowance, either online or by contacting the Regional Processing Office that handles your claim.



## Activity—Identifying Credentials

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Identify some of the training you will need to develop new skills or hone existing skills to obtain the credentials required for your career of choice. Choose one of your top three career choices and utilizing the websites listed below, answer the questions to determine if credentials are required or if additional education/training is needed.

- [www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/job-resources](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/job-resources) (Training and vocational resources)
- [www.careerinfonet.org/certifications\\_new/Default.aspx](http://www.careerinfonet.org/certifications_new/Default.aspx) (Certification finder)
- [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org) (Certification finder available on Job Summary Reports)
- [www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm) (Locates programs by State)
- [www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS](http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS) (Identifies types of apprenticeships)
- <http://www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/find-opportunities> (Program sponsors for apprenticeships by state and county)
- <https://doleta.gov/oa/veterans.cfm> (Apprenticeship finder)
- <https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/page/home> (Workforce One, Pathways to Success.)

1. What credentials are required/available for my career of choice?

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2. What education, training, and/or experience will I need to get these credentials?

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3. How many hours are required?

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4. Do I need a license?

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5. Do I need a certificate?

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6. Are formal apprenticeships required?

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7. How many hours will it take to complete an apprenticeship?

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**Notes:**



## Activity—School Assessment

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1. Identify three (3) programs or schools that meet your most important criteria.
2. Write down the name of the programs/schools you are considering.
3. Complete the table as much as you can to help you compare and decide which training programs meet your criteria for selection.
4. The following websites will be helpful in your search:

### Information on credentials

<http://www.careeronestop.org/CREDENTIALING/CredentialingHome.asp>

### Tuition and fees information, information on accreditation

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

<http://www.collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard/index.aspx>

### VA-Approved Program Finder and Employment Center on eBenefits

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school\\_locator.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_locator.asp)

<https://www.vets.gov/veterans-employment-center/job-resources>

### Yellow Ribbon Program participation

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow\\_ribbon.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon.asp)

### Principles of Excellence Program participation

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/principles\\_of\\_excellence.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/principles_of_excellence.asp)

### Apprenticeship options

<http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS/>

<https://doleta.gov/oa/veterans.cfm>

### Information on Monthly Housing Allowance / BAH Calculator

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/benefits\\_resources/rates/CH33/Ch33rates080113.asp#MHA](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/benefits_resources/rates/CH33/Ch33rates080113.asp#MHA)

<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>

**Note: Be mindful of sites asking for your personal data before accessing information.**



\*\*\*\*Sample Program Comparison Sheet\*\*\*\*

General Information	School/Program 1	School/Program 2	School/Program 3
School/Program Name	JF Drake State Technical College	Huntsville Utilities Apprenticeship	North Alabama Craft Training
Location	Huntsville, AL	Huntsville, AL	Huntsville, AL
VA Approved?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accredited?	Yes, Southern Assoc. of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges	Yes	Yes
Yellow Ribbon?	No - not a degree program	No - not a degree program	No - not a degree program
Principles of Excellence?	POE school	N/A	N/A
Other	2-year public	Program posts when they will accept applications	Helpful website
Applying	School/Program 1	School/Program 2	School/Program 3
Admissions/selection requirements	Open admission policy	TBD	Need to contact for application
Prerequisites for admission/selection	Must take COMPASS placement exam	TBD, need to contact	Need to contact for application
Management of existing credits	Accepts credit for life experiences (e.g. military)	TBD, need to contact	Need to contact for application
Application deadline	No deadline	TBD	TBD
Finances	School/Program 1	School/Program 2	School/Program 3
Yearly tuition (non-resident)	\$5,808	\$0	\$0



Books/supplies	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800
Room and board	\$0 (living w/family)	\$0 (living w/family)	\$0 (living w/family)
Transportation	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Medical	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Personal	\$25,200	\$25,200	\$25,200
Estimated total costs	\$39,808	\$34,000	\$34,000
Yellow Ribbon funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
VA benefit amount	\$6,808	\$1,000	\$1,000
Monthly housing allowance	\$10,908	\$10,908	\$10,908
Student employment & scholarship	\$13,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Estimated total funds	\$30,716	\$31,908	\$31,908
Surplus/(shortfall) total funds minus total costs	\$(9,092)	\$(2,092)	\$(2,092)

Notes: Appshp programs are very competitive, not guaranteed. However, salaried and able to meet my expenses. Distance education available at JF Drake, rolling admission. But, tech school would mean a shortfall in my budget. May need to take out additional loan to cover living expenses.



Program Comparison Sheet\*

General Information	School/Program 1	School/Program 2	School/Program 3
School/Program Name			
Location			
VA Approved?			
Accredited?			
Yellow Ribbon?			
Principles of Excellence?			
Other			
Applying	School/Program 1	School/Program 2	School/Program 3
Admissions/selection requirements			
Prerequisites for admission/selection			
Management of existing credits			
Application deadline			



Finances	School/Program 1	School/Program 2	School/Program 3
Yearly tuition (non-resident)			
Books/supplies			
Room and board			
Transportation			
Medical			
Personal			
Estimated total costs			
Yellow Ribbon funds			
VA benefit amount			
Monthly housing allowance			
Student employment & scholarship			
Estimated total funds			
Surplus/(shortfall) total funds minus total costs			

Notes:



## Volunteerism

Another important area to consider is volunteering.

Job seekers often overlook or underestimate the value of volunteer work. The exposure to varied skillsets that volunteering provides can make you a more versatile and marketable employee, not to mention more competitive. There are many volunteer opportunities available either locally, regionally, nationally or even internationally. Just like the many internship and apprenticeship opportunities available, you just need to search for a volunteer opportunity that matches your interests to learn and grow. A great place to start is [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov), a government website that provides many opportunities for volunteering and helping others across the nation. Once there, type “volunteering” in the search box to see the many available opportunities. Another great website to review is [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov).



## Predatory Practices and Scams

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### Due Diligence

Due diligence is the process of evaluating a prospective business decision by getting as much information about it as possible. The process involves careful examination, such as reading the fine print and interviewing customers, management, and leaders. The ultimate goal is to make sure there are no hidden drawbacks or traps associated with the business action under consideration.

### Consequences of Neglecting Due Diligence

If you do not do your due diligence in a business situation, you may end up buying something you didn't bargain for—or you may end up in a business relationship that will cause you trouble.

In terms of a program of study, ask the following questions:

- What do you require the program and/or institution to deliver?
- What data do you need to know to verify this?

The following 10 questions will assist you in performing due diligence.

1. Is too little time required to earn a degree?
2. Does the school offer college credits solely for lifetime or real-world experience?
3. Are tuition and fees based on a per degree basis?
4. Are there negative reports at the Better Business Bureau? ([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org))
5. Is the school located outside the U.S. or only in certain states?
6. Does the website have an .edu suffix?
7. Is the school's physical address or phone number missing from the website?
8. Is the name similar to a well-known reputable university?
9. Is the school accredited? (<http://www.ed.gov/accreditation>)
10. Are admission requirements missing or lax?

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education's website on diploma mills: [www2.ed.gov/students/prep/college/diplomamills/diploma-mills.html](http://www2.ed.gov/students/prep/college/diplomamills/diploma-mills.html)

### Verify Information

Before making commitments to any educational institution or program, be sure to verify the following:

- Is the school accredited?



Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSCCT), is recognized as the leader in accrediting schools: [www.accsct.org/directory](http://www.accsct.org/directory)

- Is the school approved to accept VA benefits?

For example, not all technology courses such as MCSE Certification and A+ Certification may not accept VA benefits: [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school\\_locator.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_locator.asp)

### **Protect Your Information**

Be aware there are predatory institutions and commercial sites that seek to recruit you rather than provide impartial information. Sometimes their goal is to gain personal information in order to consistently pursue you.

Do not share your social security number, date of birth, and information about your spouse/partner or parents. Do not provide your phone number or address until you know the credentials of the school or program.

Visit the VA GI Bill® certification school finder to help you make your initial screening assessments: <http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/>.

For more information about protecting yourself when using the internet, visit <http://onguardonline.gov/>.

### **Notes:**



# Module 3: Plan

## Overview

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All the preparation you have done to this point—and still need to do—can impact your goals if you do not organize it into a formal plan. Whether your career of choice entails several weeks or several years of education, training, or apprenticeship, planning can make a huge difference.

This module will help you put your thoughts into a formal written plan. In addition, this module will present information on organizations that provide support for Veterans who are in the community.

## Goal Setting

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SMART is a handy acronym for the five characteristics of well-designed goals and is a popular technique for validating your goals. This is important because it helps you save time and energy by making the process of goal setting more efficient and productive.

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time bound.

**Specific**—Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help you focus your efforts and clearly define what you are going to do. It is the What, Why, and How of the SMART model.

- What are you going to do? Use action words such as direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, plan, build, etc.
- Why is this important to do at this time? What do you want to accomplish?
- How are you going to do it?

**Measurable**—Choose a goal with measurable progress, so you can see the change occur.

**Achievable**—You can attain most any goal when you plan your steps wisely and establish a timeframe that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed out of reach eventually become attainable, not because your goals shrink but because you grow and expand to match them.

**Realistic**—This is not a synonym for “easy”. Realistic, in this case, means “do-able”. It means that the learning curve is not a vertical slope; the skills needed to do the work are available; the activity fits with your overall strategy and goals. A realistic project may push your skills and knowledge, but it should not break them.



**Time bound**—If you do not set a time, your commitment is too vague. It tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now. Time must be measurable, attainable, and realistic.

## Plan for Employment and Career

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### American Job Center

American Job Centers (AJC) are a single access point to federal programs and local resources to help people find a job, identify training programs, and gain skills in growing industries. AJCs offer priority services to Veterans, and have access to local labor market information for that community.

Visit <http://jobcenter.usa.gov/> or call 1-877-US-2JOBS.

### Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

As mentioned earlier, VR&E provides education and career counseling to eligible Servicemembers and Veterans, at no charge under Chapter 36.

The VR&E Program, also known as Chapter 31, provides assistance to eligible Servicemembers and Veterans with service-connected disabilities to enable them to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment or achieve independence in daily living.

Veterans must have at least a 10 percent service-connected disability and must have received an other than dishonorable discharge.

Servicemembers are eligible to apply if they expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty, obtain a rating of 20 percent or more from VA, obtain a proposed Disability Evaluation System (DES) rating of 20 percent or more from VA, or obtain a referral to a Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES).

To apply for VR&E, complete VA Form 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation through eBenefits.

### Veteran Employment Services Office

<http://vaforvets.va.gov/veso/pages/default.asp>, 1-855-824-8387

The Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO) is a strategic program management office that provides employment and career management resources designed to attract, retain, and support Veteran employees at VA and across the federal government, including those serving in the National Guard and reserve. VESO develops and implements innovative and comprehensive programs, procedures, and services to support federal Veteran recruitment and VA retention and reintegration.



VESO Programs and Services include:

- VA for Vets
- Feds for Vets
- Recruitment and Career Readiness Support
- Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program
- Human Resources Support

VESO and VA for Vets play a vital role in leveraging high-touch services with the latest technology:

- HR professionals, supervisors and hiring managers can work with Veteran Employment Coordinators around the country who specialize in hiring Veterans into non-competitive positions. Additional resources include training opportunities and new tools to improve communication with Military Servicemembers.
- National Guard and Reserve members will have access to new resources including live professional coaches to help them prepare for deployment and reintegration back into their VA careers.
- Veterans can tap into Career Center tools to assess their skills, translate military experience into civilian job opportunities, search open jobs at VA, work with professional coaches, create resumes, and more.

### **The Veterans Employment Center™**

Create a VEC™ profile or update your existing profile. At a minimum, your VEC™ profile should consist of name, email address and an objective statement.

To create a VEC™ profile:

1. Navigate to <https://www.vets.gov/veterans-employment-center/> and click on Employment Center tab
2. Under Tools on left column, click on Profile and Resume Builder
3. If you have a LinkedIn profile, you can auto-fill your resume that will be created from building your VEC™ profile
4. Fill out the fields in the form
5. On the last step, you can save your profile as a draft if you are not ready to have it be seen by potential employers
6. Information from building your profile will be used to create resume content

Keep in mind, potential employers may be looking to contact you. Be sure to update your resume and profile if your information changes. Transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families can use the VEC™.



## Small Business Administration Introduction to Entrepreneurship

The SBA Introduction to Entrepreneurship Workshop will explore your interest in business ownership and introduce you to the agencies and organizations that can assist you on the path to business ownership. Learn more at [www.SBA.gov/bootstobusiness](http://www.SBA.gov/bootstobusiness).

## Plan Upskilling

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Think of these questions while planning your upskilling opportunities:

1. Do you think there are skills you need to strengthen or improve in order to be competitive for job opportunities in your field of interest?

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2. What are some local, state, and national options available for upskilling opportunities?

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3. What financing options are available?

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## Activity—Creating a Plan for Success

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All the preparation you have done and still need to do require you to begin creating a formal plan. Some people may struggle to meet their goals because they try to keep everything they need to do “in their heads.”

You have conducted a lot of research. Review your notes to bring them together to start formulizing your plan. It is important to know that you most likely will continue to refine your career plan throughout the transition process and even well into your future.

Begin the process by gathering and documenting your assessment and research results.

On the following pages, you will find a sample completed plan and a blank plan for you to complete.



\*\*\*\*Sample Plan for Success\*\*\*\*

Career of Choice: <b>Electrician</b>	
<b>Labor Market Results:</b>	
Job Outlook?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Above Average <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Below Average
Bright Outlook?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No                      Green Job? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Salary Expectations: National:	\$ 49,840                                      State ( AL ): \$ 39,600
<b>Skills Assessment</b>	
Current skills: <b>Previous skills and training obtained from military experience</b>	
Required skills: <b>Additional coursework in electrical theory, blueprint reading, electrical code requirements, safety and first-aid</b>	
Required credentials: <b>varies – apprenticeship or technical school to verify receipt of proper training</b>	
Required licensure (if applicable): <b>Yes in AL: Electrical Contractor, Electrical Journeyman or Mine Electrician license</b>	
<b>Training Requirements</b>	
Length of training: <b>2 years for tech school, 4 years for apprenticeship</b>	
Full-time or Part-time status: <b>Full-time</b>	
Apprenticeship opportunity: <b>Yes, Huntsville Utilities Apprenticeship and North Alabama Craft Training Foundation Apprenticeship</b>	
<b>Costs and Payment Options</b>	
Estimated annual budget (refer to Core Transition GPS): <b>\$25,200</b>	
Estimated education/training costs: <b>\$1,800 – 7,608</b>	
Estimated education funding options: <b>Post 9/11 GI Bill, scholarships</b>	
Potential sources of income: <b>Part-time job or apprenticeship</b>	



## Creating a Plan for Success (continued)

Career of Choice:
<b>Labor Market Results</b>
Job Outlook? <input type="checkbox"/> Above Average <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Below Average
Bright Outlook? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No                      Green Job? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Salary Expectations: National: \$                      State (    ): \$
<b>Skills Assessment</b>
Current skills:
Required skills:
Required credentials:
Required licensure (if applicable):
<b>Training Requirements</b>
Length of training:
Full-time or Part-time status:
Apprenticeship opportunity:
<b>Costs and Payment Options</b>
Estimated annual budget (refer to Core Transition GPS): \$
Estimated education/training costs: \$
Estimated education funding options:
Potential sources of income:



## Activity—Put Your Plan in Motion

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You have put a significant amount of time and effort into researching the information and determining which career field is right for you.

Transfer your notes, concerns, questions, and required actions onto this page. Don't worry about trying to fit something neatly into one category. If it fits in more than one, just place it in one. You can always modify it later.

Below is a list of five activities to effectively put your plan in motion to pursue training. If there is something you want to note that does not fit neatly into one of the categories, make sure you still write it down. Just place it in the "other" category. Again, you can always find a place for it later. You might even make a new category for it. This is your plan.

1. Whom do I need to call, write, or visit?

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2. Things I want more information about. Things I am unclear about.

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3. Specific questions I need to ask.

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4. Things I must do.

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5. Other.

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## Using the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) to Plan for Success

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You have worked very hard to lay a foundation for a successful career plan. Throughout this track, you should have been documenting your results in the Career Technical Training Track section of your ITP.

You've learned how to identify your career goals and research your options. Each of the steps covered in this guide need to be included in your plan.

As you probably have discovered, there can be many forms and applications in the career planning process. You may find the notations you've made to be helpful. Use your ITP as a reference tool as you continue planning for your future.

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## Additional Resources

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### Veteran's Service Office/Veteran's Liaison

The Veterans Office connects student Veterans with the resources they need to successfully transition from combat to classroom to career. This includes help navigating the admissions process, applying for financial aid, VA education benefits, and academic assistance; as well as, preparing to re-enter the workforce.

The Veteran's Office should:

- Give you referrals to the right campus or community Resources
- Provide information on VA benefits
- Help navigate the campus and its administrative policies
- Invite you to workshops and social events throughout the year
- Connect you with other student Veterans on campus

### VA Certifying Official (Financial Aid)

The Veterans Representative serves as a liaison between the technical school and VA. The Veterans Office may be located within the Financial Aid Office, Registrar's Office, the Admissions Office, or the Enrollment Office.

**Note:** The VA Representative at the school is a school employee, not a VA employee. In all VA matters, any final decision should come from VA, not the school representative.

### Bookshare for Veterans

<http://communications.bookshare.org/veterans/>



Bookshare for Veterans is a global online library of books and periodicals for readers with print disabilities. Qualified members have access to over 190,000 books and periodicals and can read or listen to them using any number of assistive technology devices such as computers, iPads, Android devices, MP3 players and more. Members pay \$50 dollars annually; the fee can be funded by VR&E.

### **Joint Services Transcript (JST) (Military Transcript)**

<https://jst.doded.mil/smart/dodMandatoryBannerForm/submit.do>

JST is the Joint Services Transcript that will replace the Coast Guard Institute Transcript, the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS) and the Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART). JST is an academically accepted document approved by the American Council on Education (ACE) to validate a Servicemember's military occupational experience and training along with the corresponding ACE college credit recommendations.

All enlisted, officers and warrant officers, both active and veterans from all Army components are eligible for a JST. Note that JST receives its data from underlying Army personnel systems. JST is working to get all available personnel data, but as of the release (March 1, 2013) we will only have a subset of the data available.

JST provides a description of military schooling and work history in civilian language. It serves as a counseling tool for academic and career counselors in advising Servicemembers and veterans. It serves as an aid in preparing resumes and explaining Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard and Navy work experience to civilian employers. It also saves time and money by awarding academic credits, which means less tuition to pay and less time spent in the classroom.

### **The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)**

<https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/>

USMAP is a formal military training program executed by the Center for Personal and Professional Development that provides active duty Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy Servicemembers the opportunity to improve their job skills and to complete their civilian apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provides the nationally recognized "Certificate of Completion" upon program completion.

#### Simple Qualifications

- Be active duty/FTS, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, or Navy and,
- Be designated in a Rating/MOS and,
- Have sufficient time to complete the program while on active duty and,
- Possess a high school diploma or GED and,
- The selected trade must be your primary job at your command.



### Easy Completion

USMAP requires no off-duty hours and can grant up to one half of the required on-the-job training hours for military experience. You may also get credit for previous apprenticeships.

### Good Benefits

USMAP enhances your job skills and shows your motivation for more challenging military assignments. Having a DOL Certificate of Completion is a definite advantage in getting better civilian jobs since employers know the value of apprenticeships. Keep reading if you want to get a jump on the competition for great career jobs.

### **Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)**

DANTES is a DoD organization created to help Servicemembers pursue their educational goals and earn a degree or certification while continuing to serve their country. Through the programs that DANTES' supports, your local education services office or Navy college office have the tools and resources to help you attain your educational goals.



## Resource Guide—Useful Links

### Assess Career Aptitude and Skills

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#### GI Bill®—CareerScope®

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/careerscope.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/careerscope.asp)

CareerScope® enhances the career and educational planning process by measuring both interest and aptitude. Career recommendations can be generated that are consistent with the Guide for Occupational Exploration (GOE), the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), O\*NET as well as the U.S. DOE Career Clusters and Pathways.

### Research Labor Market Information

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#### Career Technical Education Consortium

<http://www.careertech.org/career-clusters>

The National Career Clusters™ Framework is comprised of 16 Career Clusters™ and related Career Pathways to help students of all ages explore different career options and better prepare for college and career.

#### CareerOneStop—Pathways to Career Success Videos

[www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerandClusterVideos/career-and-cluster-videos.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerandClusterVideos/career-and-cluster-videos.aspx)

These videos show the types of work people do in nearly 550 careers, organized by the 16 career clusters recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

#### Certification and Credentialing Resources

[www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/job-resources](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/job-resources) (Training and vocational resources)

[www.careerinfonet.org/certifications\\_new/Default.aspx](http://www.careerinfonet.org/certifications_new/Default.aspx) (Certification finder)

[www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm) (Locates programs by State)

[www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS](http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS) (Identifies types of apprenticeships)

<http://oa.doleta.gov/bat.cfm> (Program sponsors for apprenticeships by state and county)

<https://doleta.gov/oa/veterans.cfm> (Apprenticeship finder)

<https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/page/home> (Workforce One)

These sites can be used to research credentials and training requirements for a particular career.



**Department of Veterans Affairs—Educational and Career Counseling Program (Chapter 36)**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu\\_voc\\_counseling.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu_voc_counseling.asp)

This site provides one-on-one counseling to determine the educational and career opportunities best suited for you.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—Licensing and Certification Information**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing\\_certification.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing_certification.asp)

This site provides information on receiving GI Bill® reimbursement for licensing and certification tests. There is also a link on this page to a detailed pamphlet regarding licensure and certification.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—On-the-Job & Apprenticeship Training Programs**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob\\_apprenticeship.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp)

This site provides information for On-the-Job and Apprenticeship programs, as well as a factsheet.

**Military Credentialing and Licensing Sites**  
[www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/certifications.asp](http://www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/certifications.asp) (U.S. Air Force)

[www.cool.army.mil](http://www.cool.army.mil) (U.S. Army)

[www.cool.navy.mil](http://www.cool.navy.mil) (U.S. Navy)

<https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/genInfo.jsp> (U.S. Coast Guard, Navy and Marines)

Their mission is to research and evaluate national professional credentials applicable to specific occupational specialties, crosswalk military to civilian occupations, assist in aligning military training with industry standards that lead to credentialing eligibility, and display/provide funding resources available for credentials.

**O\*Net Online—Bright Outlook Occupations**  
[www.onetonline.org/find/bright](http://www.onetonline.org/find/bright)

A key element to O\*NET is their Bright Outlook jobs database. In this database, Bright Outlook occupations are those jobs that are (1) expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, (2) will have large numbers of job openings, or (3) are new and emerging occupations.



## O\*Net Online

[www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)

The O\*NET OnLine database is an interactive application for exploring and searching occupations. The database provides the basis for Career Exploration Tools, a set of valuable assessment instruments for workers and students looking to find or change careers. The O\*NET database includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, and interests associated with occupations. This information can be used to facilitate career exploration, vocational counseling, and a variety of human resources functions, such as developing job orders and position descriptions and aligning training with current workplace needs.

## O\*Net Resource Center

[www.onetcenter.org](http://www.onetcenter.org)

The O\*NET program is the nation's primary source of occupational information. Use this site to download the O\*NET database, career exploration tools, job analysis questionnaires, employer guides, and technical reports.

## My Next Move

[www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org)

This is an interactive tool for job seekers and students to learn more about their career options. My Next Move has tasks, skills, salary information, and more for over 900 different careers. Users can find careers through keyword search; by browsing industries that employ different types of workers; or through the O\*NET Interest Profiler, a tool that offers personalized career suggestions based on a person's interests and level of work experience.

## Explore Career Training Options

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### Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSC)

[www.accsc.org/directory](http://www.accsc.org/directory)

ACCSC is a valid and reliable authority on the assessment of education quality and accreditation status for career technical training programs.



## Department of Labor—Employment and Training Administration

<http://www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/find-opportunities>

[www.doleta.gov/oa/apprentices.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/oa/apprentices.cfm)

[www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/OA/sainformation.cfm)

[www.doleta.gov/oa](http://www.doleta.gov/oa)

These site provides information about apprenticeship and training programs nationwide and link you to state apprenticeship program information and registered apprenticeships programs.

## Department of Veterans Affairs—School Locator

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school\\_locator.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_locator.asp)

This site provide information on how to find approved education and training programs that meet GI Bill® requirements.

## O\*Net Online—Credentialing and Apprenticeships

[www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS](http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/RAPIDS)

This is a credentialing and apprenticeship link.

## OnGuardOnline

<http://onguardonline.gov/>

This site provides tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you protect against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and safeguard your personal information.

## Researching Training Programs

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob\\_apprenticeship.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp)

[www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/GetCredentials.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/EducationTraining/KeepLearning/GetCredentials.aspx)

[www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0241-choosing-vocational-school](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0241-choosing-vocational-school)

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/community-college-faqs>

[www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/apprent.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/apprent.cfm)

[www.doleta.gov/OA/apprenticeship.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/OA/apprenticeship.cfm)

<https://ojttoolkit.workforce3one.org/page/home>

Sites used in Activity 1 to research the differences between training programs.



### **U.S. Department of Education—Accreditation Database**

<http://www.ed.gov/accreditation>

This is a public service database on accredited programs.

### **U.S. Department of Education—Diploma Mills**

[www2.ed.gov/students/prep/college/diplomamills/diploma-mills.html](http://www2.ed.gov/students/prep/college/diplomamills/diploma-mills.html)

This site provides information on diploma mills and accreditation.

### **Workforce One—On-the-Job Training Home Page**

<https://ojttoolkit.workforce3one.org/page/home>

On-the-Job Training (OJT) information is provided on this site.

### **Workforce One—On-the-Job Training Resources**

<https://ojttoolkit.workforce3one.org/page/resources/1001022846429459561>

This provides videos discussing benefits of an OJT program.

### **Workforce One—Registered Apprenticeship**

<https://21stcenturyapprenticeship.workforce3one.org/page/home>

This site links you to registered apprenticeship programs.

### **Workforce One—Pathways to Success**

<https://doleta.gov/oa/veterans.cfm>

This tool allows users to search for apprenticeship opportunities in a specific town or region while also showing nearby Registered Pre-Apprenticeship programs. Users can also find community colleges that have articulation agreements with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that can provide the opportunity to earn college credit or even complete a two- or four-year degree. The tool includes a map that provides the statewide totals for the following figures:

- Total number of sponsors
- Total number of pre-apprenticeship programs
- Total number of community college partners

Clicking on a state will populate the results section under the map by search results as defined by the filter criteria.



## Identify VA and Other Organizations' Benefits

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### American Legion—State Benefits

[www.legion.org/education/statebenefits](http://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits)

Several states offer veterans education benefits and programs of their own, in addition, or as an alternative, to federal GI Bill® benefits. In some states, tuition waivers, scholarships or grants are offered for those who do not qualify for federal help, or to fill in gaps where federal help leaves off. In other states, assistance is provided to augment the federal benefits.

### Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—Complaints

[www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint)

If you think you are the victim of a predatory practice you may report it on this site.

### Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—Know Before You Owe

[www.consumerfinance.gov/students/knowbeforeyouowe](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/students/knowbeforeyouowe)

This is a good source of information about student loans.

### Department of Education—FAFSA Information

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

This is the link to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

### Department of Education—Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program

[www.studentaid.ed.gov/publicservice](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/publicservice)

This site provides information on the public service loan forgiveness program.

### Department of Education—Student Aid

<http://studentaid.ed.gov>

This is a great source of free information from the DoE on preparing for and funding education.



## Department of Labor—American Job Centers (formerly One-Stop Career Centers)

<http://jobcenter.usa.gov/resources-for-veterans>

One-Stop Career Centers are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers under one roof. Established under the Workforce Investment Act, the centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services.

This section of the website is geared specifically towards Veterans and their employment opportunities. The site offers a National Resource Directory for support services available, a job bank, as well as links to other sites such as: eBenefits, CareerOneStop, My Next Move for Veterans, and Feds Hire Vets.

## Department of Labor—The Gold Card

[www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html](http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html)

The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive, follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. The Gold Card initiative is a joint effort of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

## Department of Labor—Programs for Veterans

[www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra](http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra)

This site provides information about the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) which protects civilian job rights and benefits for Veterans and members of the active and Reserve components of the U.S. armed forces.

## Department of Labor—Resources for Veterans

[www.dol.gov/vets/index.htm](http://www.dol.gov/vets/index.htm)

Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) provides Servicemembers and Veterans resources and expertise to assist and prepare them to obtain meaningful careers, maximize employment opportunities, and protect employment rights.

## Department of Veterans Affairs—eBenefits

[www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)

eBenefits is a joint VA/DoD web portal that provides resources and self-service capabilities to Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families to research, access and manage their VA and military benefits and personal information.



**Department of Veterans Affairs—Education and Career Counseling Program (Chapter 36)**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu\\_voc\\_counseling.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/edu_voc_counseling.asp)

This site provides information about free education and career counseling for Servicemembers, Veterans and certain dependents.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—GI Bill® Comparison Tool**  
<http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool>

The GI Bill® comparison tool provides key information about college affordability and value so beneficiaries can choose the best education program for their needs.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—GI Bill® Feedback System**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp)

Submit a complaint if your school or employer is failing to follow the Principles of Excellence.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—Post-9/11 GI Bill® and Other Programs Information**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill)

This site provides information about education benefits programs administered by the VA.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—Veteran and Military Services Organizations**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/stpaul/vso.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/stpaul/vso.asp)

This links you to a directory available on the web listing all the Veterans and Military Service Organizations.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—VetSuccess Program**  
[www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)

This site can be accessed by visiting the Employment Center on eBenefits, clicking on “Job Seeker resources and Service”, and then selecting “Partnered Resources”. The site is a comprehensive one-stop site for Veteran and Servicemember employment needs. Veterans can browse job listings, post resumes, and apply for positions directly on the site.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Home Page**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp)

This site provides information regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment program.

**Department of Veterans Affairs—Work Study Programs**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/workstudy.asp)

This site provides information about the work study program available through the VA.



## Department of Veteran Affairs—Yellow Ribbon Program

[www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow\\_ribbon.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon.asp)

This site provides information about the Yellow Ribbon Program, which helps offset the cost of tuition and fees at private and out-of-state public schools.

## Planning Resources

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### Bookshare for Veterans

<http://communications.bookshare.org/veterans>

This is a global online library of books and periodicals for readers with print disabilities.

### DANTES—Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support

[www.dantes.doded.mil/index.html](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/index.html)

A DoD organization created to help Servicemembers pursue their educational goals and earn a degree or certification while continuing to serve their country. Through the programs that DANTES' supports, your local education services office or Navy college office have the tools and resources to help you attain your educational goals.

### Joint Services Transcript (Military Transcript)

<https://jst.doded.mil/smart/dodMandatoryBannerForm/submit.do>

The Joint Services Transcript (JST) is an academically accepted document approved by the American Council on Education (ACE) to validate a Servicemember's military occupational experience and training along with the corresponding ACE college credit recommendations.

### The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)

<https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil>

A formal military training program executed by the Center for Personal and Professional Development that provides active duty Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy Servicemembers the opportunity to improve their job skills and to complete their civilian apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provides the nationally recognized "Certificate of Completion" upon program completion.



## Veteran Employment Services Office

<http://vaforvets.va.gov/veso/pages/default.asp>

The Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO) is a strategic program management office that oversees all VA Veteran employment initiatives and manages VA for Vets, its flagship initiative. VA for Vets is a comprehensive career support and management program for Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members and VA employees.

