

Economic Nuggets

December 10, 2021

The latest news, views, and announcements

INSIDE

Economy

Employment & Transition

*Education, Licensing &
Credentialing*

Homelessness & Housing

*Small Business & Government
Contracting*

Meetings

Career Fairs

Legislation Tracking

Action taken on Legislation

Resource Page

More Stories

National Veterans Employment & Education Commission Newsletter



VE&E'S LATEST ANNOUNCEMENT

The topic of discussion was on the competitiveness of the VA home loans in the recent housing market. Some key points mentioned were:

- The proportion of VA home loans relative to other loans decreased by 10.5%.
- 89% of sellers were likely to accept an offer from a buyer with a conventional loan, and only
- 30% were likely to accept an offer from a buyer using a VA loan. According to the same survey,
- 59% of sellers' realtors stated stricter home inspection requirements reduced the attractiveness of buyers using the VA Home Loan.
- 36% / 38% of sellers surveyed were concerned about low appraisal values and lengthy closing timelines.



Joseph Sharpe, *Director of the Veterans Employment and Education Division for The American Legion* testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on December 8, 2021.

The recorded meeting can be found at [YouTube](#) "**Removing Barriers to Veteran Home Ownership**". You can find all hearing documents on the Committee Repository [Here](#).



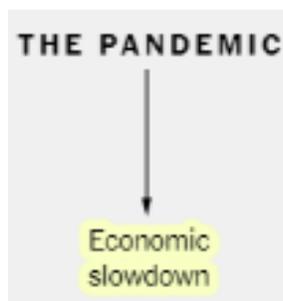
ECONOMY

HOW THE SUPPLY CHAIN CRISIS UNFOLDED

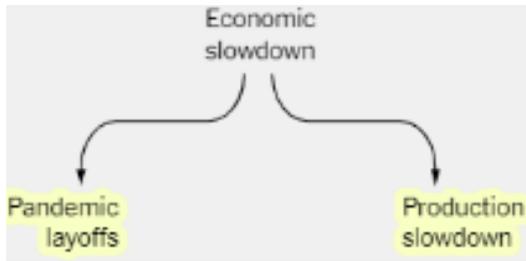
Ships stuck at sea, warehouses overflowing, trucks without drivers: The highly intricate and interconnected global supply chain is in upheaval, with little end in sight.

The turmoil has revealed how the need to ship surgical masks to West Africa from China can have a cascading effect on Ford's ability to put back-up cameras on its cars at factories in Ohio and delay the arrival of Amazon Prime orders in Florida in time for the holidays.

In one way or another, much of the crisis can be traced to the outbreak of Covid-19.



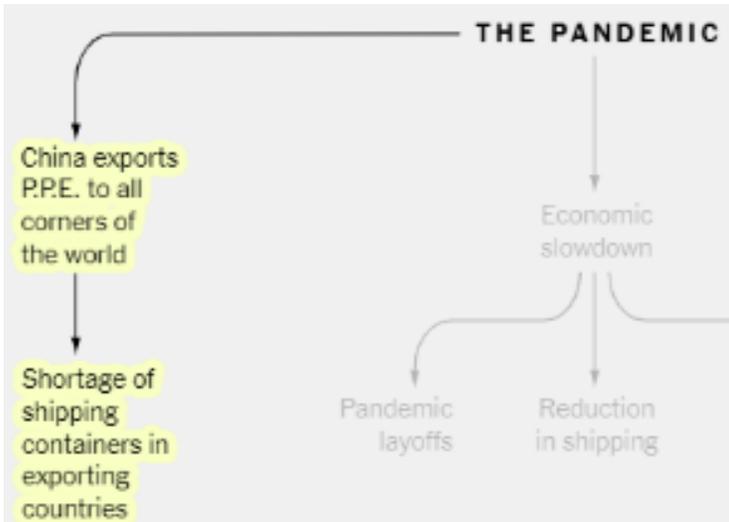
When the pandemic struck in early 2020, people and businesses were quickly forced to **restrict their activity**, sending the global economy into a brief but damaging free fall.



As offices and stores closed, and factories from Asia to Europe and North America **halted production**, companies **laid off workers** in masses. That took spending power — an economic life force — out of people’s hands.



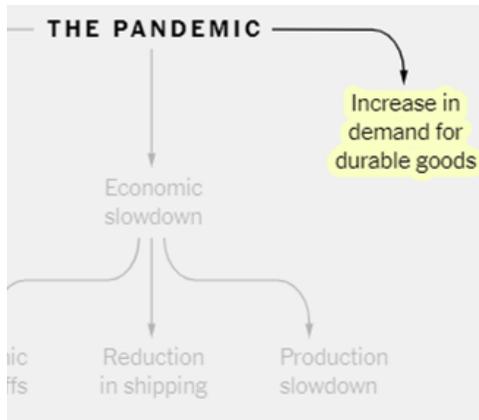
With fewer goods being made and fewer people with paychecks to spend, manufacturers and shipping companies assumed that **demand would drop sharply**. But a far more complicated situation unfolded, challenging the global supply chain.



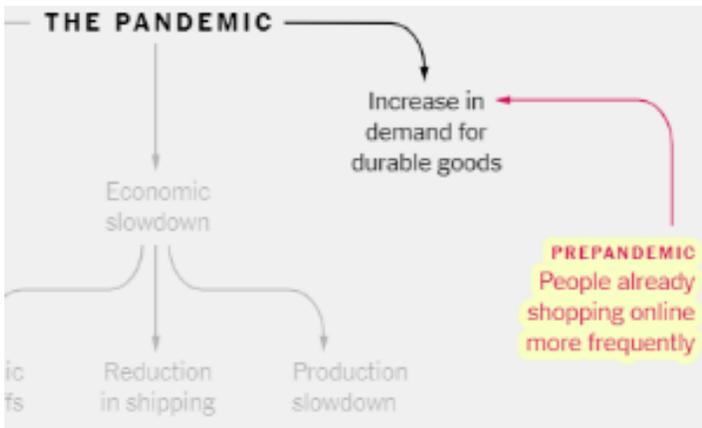
In early 2020, the entire planet suddenly needed surgical masks and gowns and other protective gear. Most of these goods were made in China, which produced half of all protective masks the year before.

As Chinese factories ramped up to meet the new demand, cargo vessels **delivered protective gear around the globe**, even to regions that do relatively little trade with China, such as West Africa.

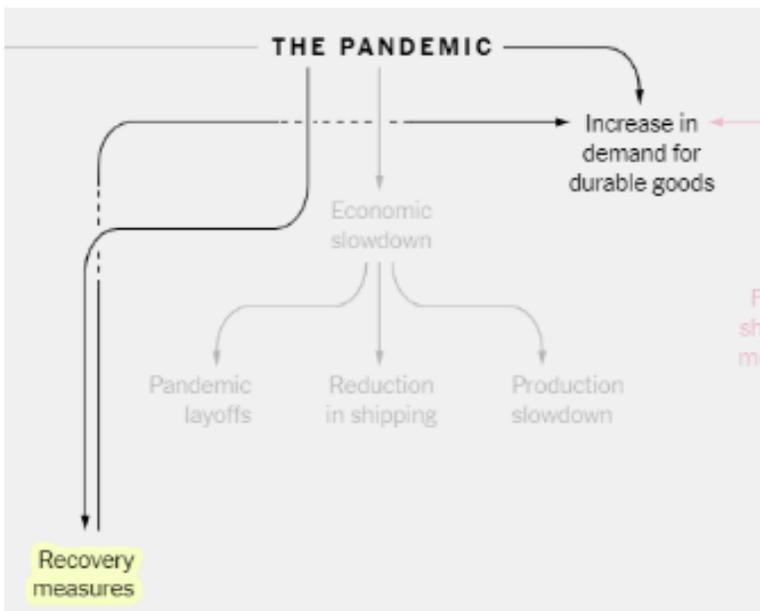
Empty shipping containers piled up in many parts of the world. The result was a **shortage of shipping containers** in the one country that needed them the most: China.



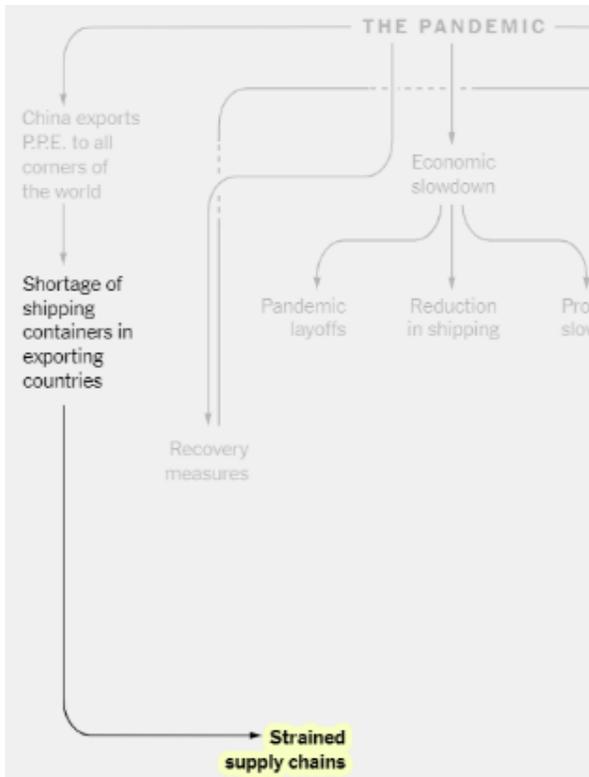
China's factories were pumping out goods in record volumes. Despite the worry that economic devastation would destroy spending in many countries, the pandemic merely **shifted the demand**: Instead of eating out and attending events, Americans bought office furniture, electronics and kitchen appliances.



The pandemic sharply accelerated a trend that had been advancing for years: *the shift toward online shopping*. From April to June 2020, as the first wave of the virus spread, Amazon sold 57 percent more items than it had a year earlier.



The spending in the United States was also encouraged by **government stimulus** programs that mailed checks to households, part of a record-setting effort to resuscitate the economy. Households collectively received hundreds of billions in recovery aid.



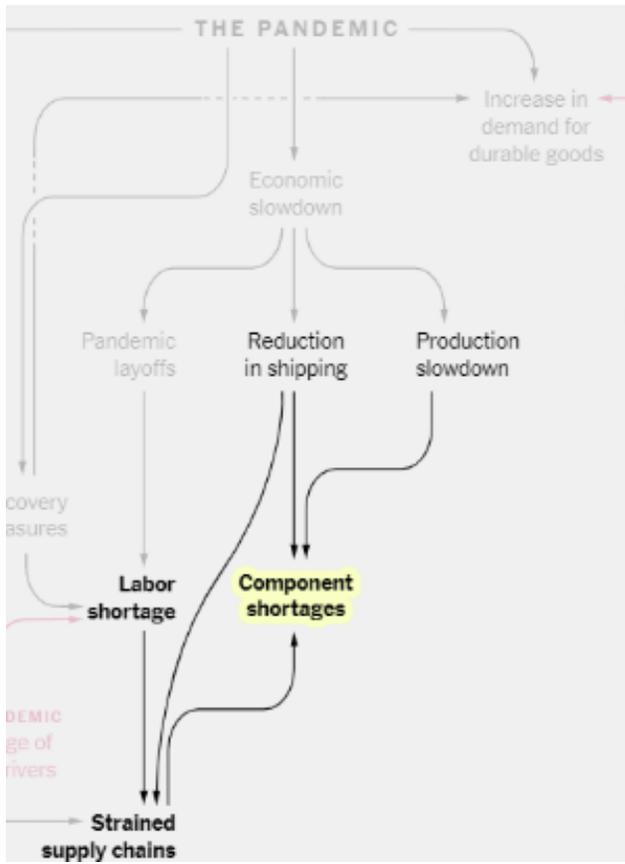
As demand increased, a wave of factory goods **swiftly overwhelmed U.S. ports**. With too many ships arriving at once, boats had to wait at times in 100-vessel queues off the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Swelling orders also outstripped the availability of shipping containers, and the cost of shipping a container from Shanghai to Los Angeles skyrocketed tenfold.

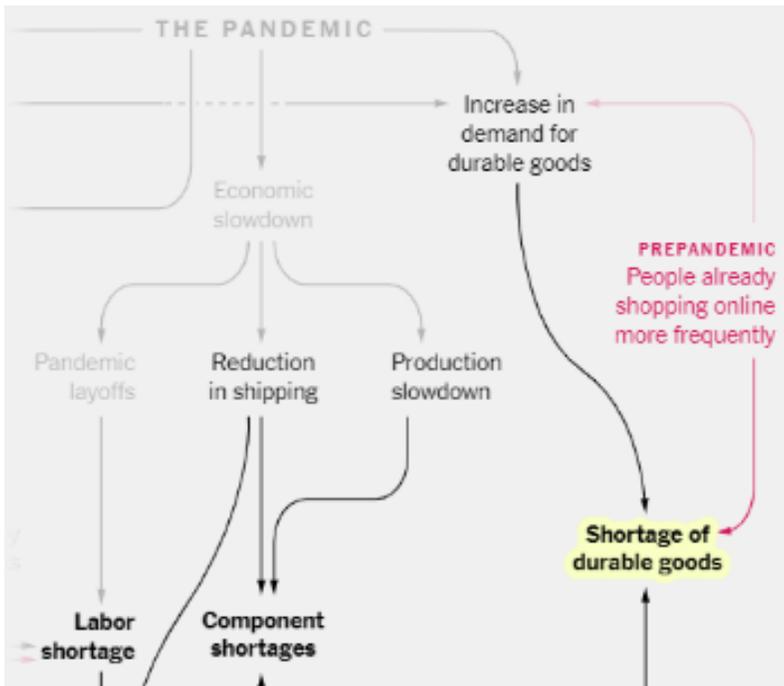


Even once unloaded, containers piled up on docks unclaimed, because of a **shortage of truck drivers** needed to haul cargo to warehouses. Truck drivers had long been scarce, with wages steadily eroding over the years amid grueling working conditions.

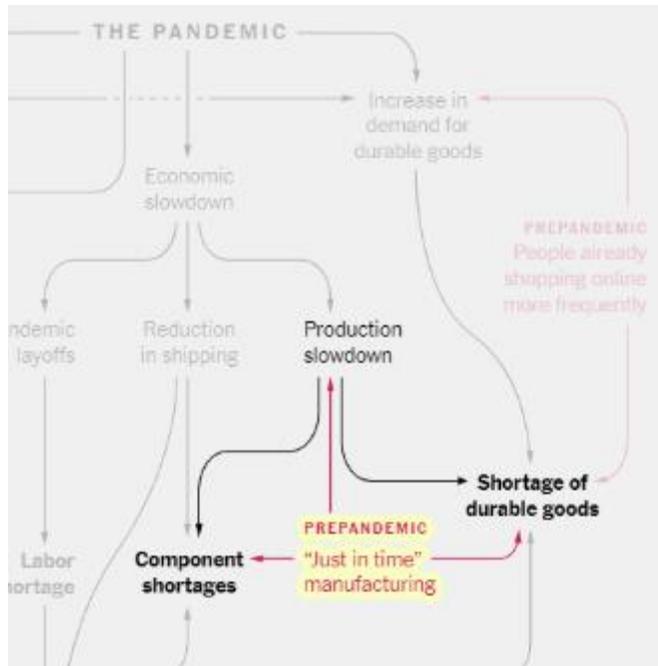
Businesses across the economy **struggled to hire workers**: at warehouses, at retailers, at construction companies and for other skilled trades. Even as employers resorted to lifting wages, labor shortages persisted, worsening the scarcity of goods.



Shortages of one thing have turned into shortages of others. A dearth of computer chips, for example, has forced major automakers to slash production, while even delaying the manufacture of medical devices.

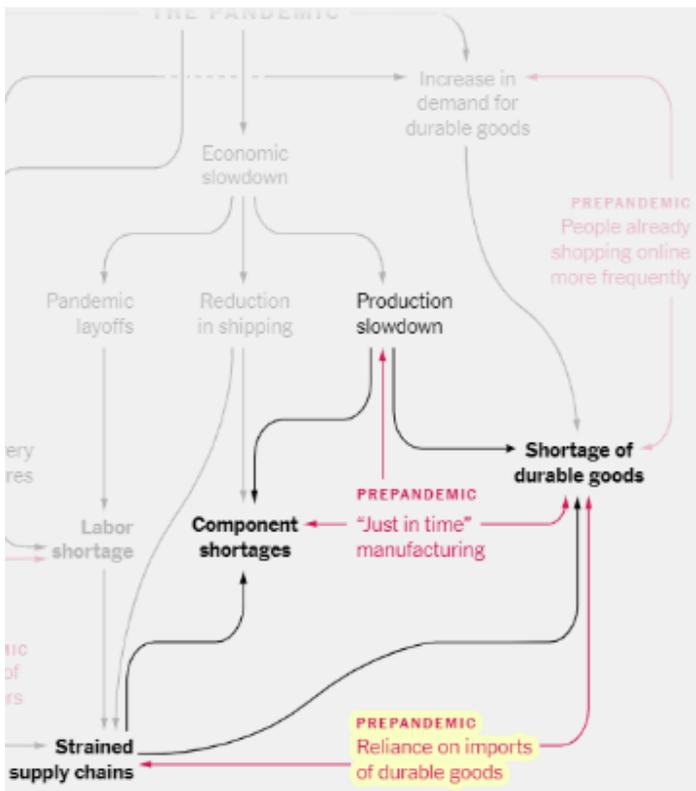


As businesses and consumers have reacted to shortages by ordering earlier and extra, especially ahead of the year-end holidays, that has placed **more strain** on the system.

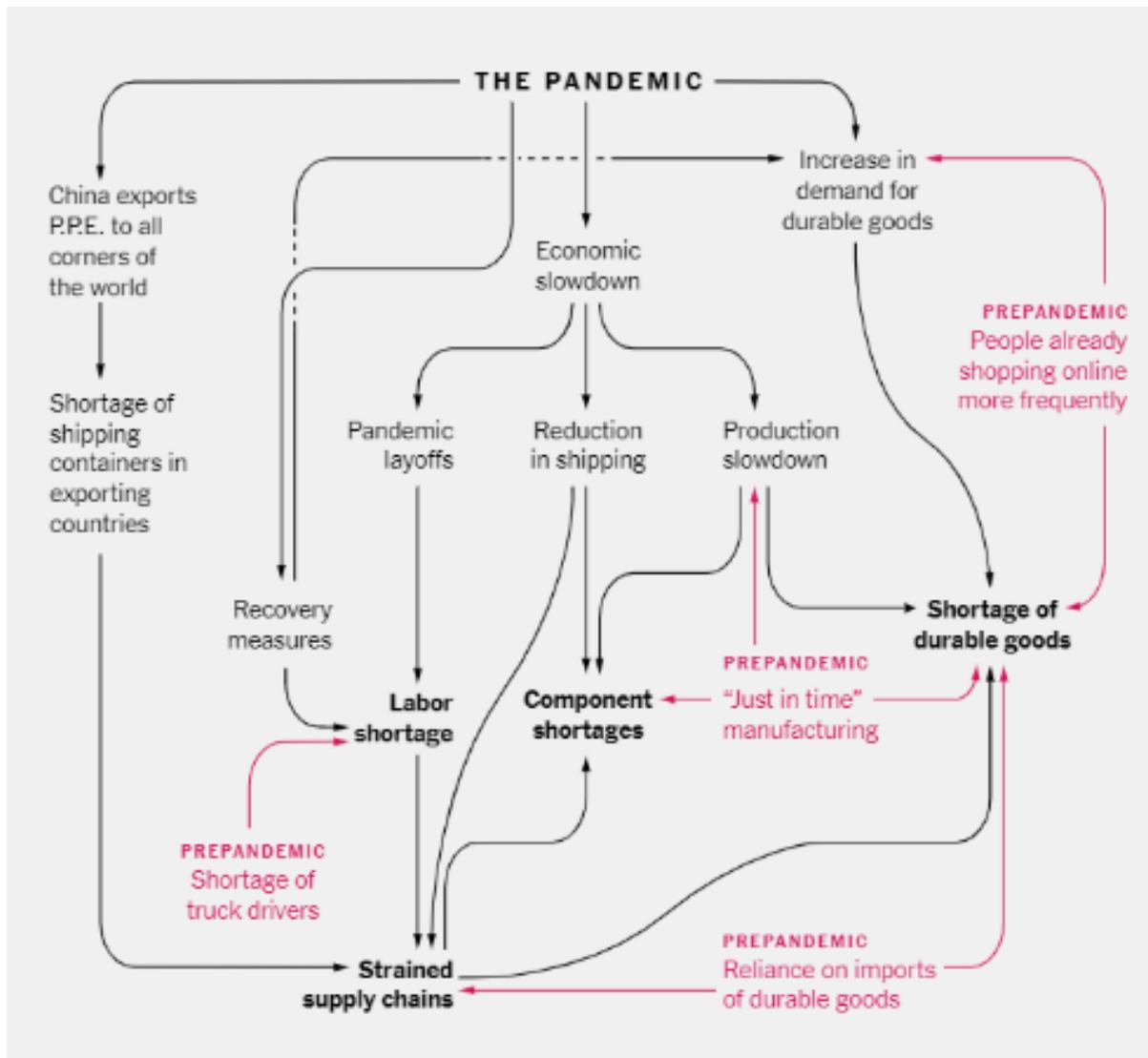


Even as the pandemic catalyzed it, the crisis has roots in a production model pioneered by Toyota at the end of World War II and disseminated throughout the business world by consulting companies like McKinsey.

Under the model, called ***“just in time” manufacturing***, companies stockpile as few raw materials and parts as possible, instead buying what they need as they need it.



That works only when they can get what they need when they need it. For years, some experts have warned that the global economy is over reliant on ***lean production and faraway factories***, exposed to the inevitable shock. The pandemic has seemingly validated that view.



With the holiday shopping season underway and the Biden administration pressing to force major ports to expand operations, the supply chain has become a central political issue.

It is also a key factor in rising inflation, which is deepening concerns about the fate of the global economy and its recovery from the lockdowns of the pandemic.

The supply chain issues are likely to last for many more months — if not years.

Gamio, L., & Goodman, P. S. (2021, December 5). How the supply chain crisis unfolded - The New York Times. How the Supply Chain Crisis Unfolded. Retrieved December 8, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/05/business/economy/supply-chain.html>.

ECONOMIC NEWS RELEASE

- The national unemployment rate is **4.2 percent** (November 2021)
- Gulf War II veterans' unemployment rate is **4.3 percent** (November 2021)
- Gulf War II women veterans' unemployment rate is **3.6 percent** (November 2021)
- In November 2021, the veteran unemployment rate was **3.9%**, down from **4.2%** the previous month. The comparable non-veteran unemployment rate was **4.2%** in November.
- Newly discharged veterans claiming benefits totaled **5,101** an increase of **264** from the preceding week

HOUSEHOLD DATA

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

[Numbers in thousands]

Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2021	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2021	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2021
Unemployed	552	327	492	281	60	46
Unemployment rate	6.3	3.9	6.4	3.9	5.3	4.0



EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION

SOLID START PROGRAM HAS HELPED OVER 157,000 VETERANS IN JUST TWO YEARS

VA celebrates the second anniversary of the [VA Solid Start](#) program is an innovative outreach campaign focused on connecting with recently separated Veterans regardless of their character of discharge during the critical first year after release from active duty.

[Solid Start](#) seeks to connect with eligible Veterans by phone at three key stages (0-90-, 91-180-, 181-365- days) after they leave the military. Representatives address issues or challenges identified by the Veteran during the calls and assist with accessing benefits and services, such as disability compensation, mental health care, education and employment support, to meet their specific needs. Critically, it's focused on establishing a relationship with Veterans to increase the likelihood that they will connect with

VA and utilize available benefits and services when needed.

AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS

VA is dedicated to supporting all transitioning service members and their families. Since its launch in December 2019, VA Solid Start representatives have successfully connected with more than 157,000 eligible Veterans. Of these, more than 24,000 were priority Veterans who had a mental health care appointment during the last year of active duty.

ADDITIONAL TRANSITION PROGRAMS OFFERED BY VA

VA Solid Start is not the only resource available to help service members transition from military

to civilian life. VA also offers a wide variety of other benefits and services, such as:

- [VA Transition Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#)
- [Women's Health Transition Training](#)
- [Personalized Career Planning and Guidance](#)
- [Economic Development Initiatives](#)
- [Military Life Cycles Modules](#)

These programs help Veterans build healthy civilian lifestyles while also informing them about the benefits and services they have earned. The first year after service can pose many challenges, but that weight is not something Veterans must carry alone. VA is here to help.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to learn more about Solid Start or VA's other transition benefits, visit [VA's Transition and Economic Development website](#) or [VA.gov](#).

If you have separated from the military in the past 90 days and have not been contacted by VA Solid Start, you can call 1-800-827-0611 to reach a representative today. Operators are standing by Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. ET.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1; text to 838255; or chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat. Representatives are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



Per [Resolution No. 319: Expanding veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#), The American Legion commends the responsiveness of the VA Solid Start Program and is eager to see more capture metrics over time. Solid Start could be an effective data collection and evaluation method on servicemember transition preparedness and VA outreach effectiveness.

Coleman, Craig. "Solid Start Program Has Helped over 157,000 Veterans in ..." Vantage Point, US Department of Veteran Affairs, 7 Dec. 2021, <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/97970/solid-start-program-has-helped-over-157000-veterans-in-just-two-years/>.

GRANT AIMED TO HELP TRANSITIONING MILITARY FAMILIES

New funding from the Department of Labor is being spent to help those transitioning out of the military in Central Texas start their new life.

Starting a new career can be scary and that especially goes for people transitioning out of the military and their spouses. That is why Texas Workforce Solutions takes the time to make that process as smooth as possible and the Department of Labor has stepped in to help fund their efforts in the form of a grant.

"So, this grant is for the National Dislocated Workers grant and what we did was apply for money through the TWC because there is a need for support for transitioning service members and their spouses," said Jennifer Brady, director of communications at Workforce Solutions of Central Texas.

The grant is for \$7.9 million and actually double the amount they've received in the past.

"Based on the success of our Transition Liaison Officer Alan Wedding and his efforts on Fort Hood, we have noticed that there's a need," said Brady. "There's a need for this kind of support, which is why we were able to get more funding because the TWC also saw that need."

The new funding will go to help Workforce Solutions pay for various assistance and training programs dedicated to our nation's heroes.

The additional funding will go a long way to helping those families that served their country like Alan Wedding himself did for over 20 years. "Hindsight is 20/20 and can you stop time and go back in time? No, but I can tell you the things I did wrong during transition and hope that you do them better than I did and not feel like you are alone," said Wedding.



"Whether it's job search assistance. Whether it's interview skills or soft skills. Whether we need to provide a certification or pay for a certification, we're going to be able to help more military families get established in the Central Texas area," said Alan Wedding, Military Transition Liaison.

They will also be able to expand programs like their Ford Technician of Tomorrow program that provides more than just training.

"We buy them a tool kit once they have completed the program and have a job lined up with a Ford dealership in the state of Texas and we also assist in the tuition at Central Texas College," said Wedding.

Fort Hood officials said in a statement that they are grateful for the service that TWC provide to our nation's heroes.

"Fort Hood is grateful for the support TWC gives to our soldiers and looks forward to working with TWC to find employment for our transitioning soldiers' spouses and veterans," said Thomas Rhienlander, Director of Fort Hood Public Affairs.

Workforce Solutions is urging any veteran, military spouse or transitioning service member to reach out to them if they are looking to start a new journey to success.

Per [Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and](#)

[Spouses](#), The American Legion congratulates Texas Workforce Solutions on acquiring the Department of Labor grant and looks forward to seeing reports on the grant's impact on facilitating servicemember transition to gainful employment.

Schindler, Adam. "Grant Aimed to Help Transitioning Military Families." KXXV, KXXV, 8 Dec. 2021, <https://www.kxxv.com/hometown/bell-county/grant-aimed-to-help-transitioning-military-families>.

¿DID YOU KNOW?

CONGRESS MAY SAVE TROOPS TO TEACHERS PROGRAM

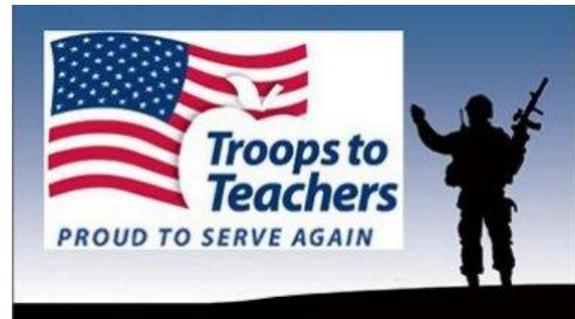
The House voted to revive the Troops to Teachers program in a compromise version of the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) crafted by the bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

Under the leadership of Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jack Reed, D-R.I., the language to revive the Troops to Teachers program was included in the compromise version of the sweeping defense budget passed by the House on Dec. 7. Now it goes to the Senate for approval before heading to President Biden's desk for enactment.

Troops to Teachers was previously defunded with little notice to servicemembers as part of the Defense-Wide Review when the Department of Defense (DoD) opted to realign program resources to higher priority programs more closely aligned to the National Defense Strategy. The program was allowed to sunset on Sept. 30, 2021.

When The American Legion learned of the exclusion of the program in the House of Representatives' version of the NDAA, the organization sprang to action. In a letter addressed to the House and Senates Armed Services Committee, a coalition of veterans

service organizations (VSOs) urged lawmakers to reauthorize the program.



“We believe the value of Troops to Teachers cannot be understated,” the VSOs wrote in a joint letter. “It provides employment assistance to transitioning veterans, which aids in lowering veteran unemployment; it alleviates nationwide teaching shortages, which improves education quality; and it increases access and representation among traditionally less-represented groups to teaching careers.

“Allowing the Troops for Teachers program to sunset would go against America’s critical need to support our children’s education.”

The Troops to Teachers program was initially authorized under the 1993 NDAA as an official DOD program.



Since its 1994 launch, the program has successfully supported veterans transitioning to careers in education for over 27 years. The program was designed to assist transitioning servicemembers and veterans to begin careers as educators in K-12 public, charter and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. DOD reported the

program placed over 21,000 veteran teachers in classrooms since its inception. Additionally, the program provides counseling and referral services to help participants meet education and licensing requirements, as well as helps them secure a teaching position.

American Legion [Resolution No. 21: Support State and National Funding for Troops to Teachers Program](#) resolves The American Legion's support for renewing funding for the Troops to Teachers program at both state and national levels.

Wolf, Mackenzie. "Congress May Save Troops to Teachers Program." The American Legion, The American Legion, 9 Dec. 2021, <https://www.legion.org/education/254453/congress-may-save-troops-teachers-program>.

Staff Meetings on Employment Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with Linda Rix, Co-CEO of Avue Technologies Corporation, to discuss the agenda and tentative list of panelists for the upcoming Employment Innovation Taskforce set for late February 2022. Topics considered for the agenda consisted of:

- Discussing the impacts of the Department of Labor's Transition Assistance Program course outcomes
- Examining private and public sector reactions to labor market shifts due the decrease in the labor force participation rate
- Exploring avenues to ensure increased veteran presence in federal employment.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a House Judiciary Committee hearing on the markup of five pieces of legislation. Relevant legislation discussed was H.R. 4977, the "Better Cybercrime Metrics Act"

Chairman Nadler provided background on the bill, stating its purpose to "advance understanding of cybercrime so we can better prevent and combat its occurrence." According to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), there has been an increase in reported complaints and monetary losses over the past five years with seven hundred thousand complaints and \$4.2 billion dollars lost in 2020 alone. Senator Nadler stressed that the true cost is underestimated since the metrics rely on victim's reports.



The Chairman concluded that the bill will help address the gap in the Uniform Federal Crime Reporting Act of 1988, which has not been updated to uniformly report cybercrime, by creating a taxonomy of different types of crime and cyber enabled crimes.



While Ranking Member Jordan agreed on the legislation's intent to serve as an additional mechanism to bring criminals to justice, he asserted that the committee "should be having these types of discussions before considering legislation."

Representative Scanlon spoke of the cybercrimes that targeted high profile institutions in her region, resulting in costs to institutions, taxpayers, and productivity due to resource efficiency loss.



Representative Ross applauded the bill's effort to provide robust data collection on cybercrime which will "help law enforcement and national security experts develop tools they need to combat this growing problem." Given the lack of technical and financial resources that many businesses lack, the bill will serve to ensure that the "federal and private sector are equipped to combat cybercriminal threats."

Representative Chabot emphasized the ripple effects that cyberattacks on large companies and infrastructure have on the everyday lives of American citizens. Additionally, he stressed the importance of the legislation, since there is no comprehensive data collection on cybercrimes, since states and localities don't report attacks to the federal government, and since small businesses are at high risk of failing after falling victim to cyberattacks. As a member of the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus, he addressed the progress of the Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act, which passed the house for take up in the Senate.



Representative Lee emphasized the need to improve and track cybercrime in order to prevent future instances from arising. She provided staggering statistics from a Gallup Poll whereby 25% of Americans were targeted by cyberattacks. Additionally, according to the IC3, older Americans over 60 years of age are often targeted by cyber criminals, resulting in losses of over \$966 million in 2020 alone.

Amendments to the bill along with the legislation itself were reported favorably by the committee.



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a meeting by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to discuss how to ensure American Leadership in Microelectronics. The purpose of the hearing is to acquire critical guidance for Congress and the administration to consider implementing and funding the Chips for America Act. Four witnesses provided opening statements.



Dr. Ann Kelleher is the Executive Vice President and General Manager of Technology Development at Intel. The company wishes to have U.S. Tech leadership endure through Intel's past and future efforts. Intel will spend over \$150 billion over the next ten years, "covering expansions in Arizona, New Mexico, and the US Greenfield Site," as well as future tech R&D. Dr. Kelleher stressed the importance of semiconductors, citing them as "fundamental to U.S. leadership, the economy, and U.S. national security."

She discussed the changing landscape of companies producing semiconductors. Twenty years ago, 25 companies globally built leading-edge chips, with the United States contributing a large share of global revenues. Only three companies exist globally today, with Intel serving as the sole provider in the United States. Dr. Kelleher attributed the public funding and the inability to reduce costs compared to the competition as challenges threatening U.S. leadership in the market. Private investment is twenty times greater than federal funding. Federal funding dwarfed private financing 40 years ago. To prevent industry erosion, Dr. Kelleher urged an increase in federal funding. She urged Congress to pass the CHIPS for Act in order to rectify the aforementioned problems and maintain electronic competitiveness. The CHIPS Act seeks to provide substantial advancements toward semiconductor R&D and provide incentives for manufacturers to bring production back to the United States.

Manish Bhatia is the Executive Vice President of Global Operations at Micron Technology Inc. Micron Technology is a leader in memory and storage technology in the United States and is the second-largest semiconductor integrated device manufacturer in the United States. Being the only firm to manufacture Dynamic Random-Access Memory (DRAM) and NAND flash memory, Mr. Bhatia stressed how DRAM "provides rapid access data for processing, while NAND flash provides long term data storage." These technologies are the foundation for Automated Intelligence (AI) and 5G. Due to the growth and demand of memory and storage technology from 10% in 2000 to 70% presently given its application throughout healthcare, automotive, and communication industries, he urged for increased focus on R&D, manufacturing, and workforce development to keep the United States as a leader in flourishing technology.



Dr. Michael Witherell is the director of Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory and was previously the director of Fermi Lab. Dr. Witherell emphasized a robust federal government commitment to aid the nation's ability to "develop and deploy advanced semiconductors." He urged the Department of Energy (DOE) to continue playing a significant role as a stakeholder due to its involvement in the physical sciences that make up microelectronics, its sustained involvement in producing world-class research facilities, and its capacity to optimize the energy budget to efficiently ramp up production and meet current energy goals.

Dr. Mung Chiang is the Executive Vice President and Dean of the Engineering College at Purdue University. Dr. Chiang visualized the supply chain of the digital economy. First, he described how raw materials were needed to produce chips. Manufacturing then fits the raw material through hardware and programs them through software. The designed chips are then "packaged and integrated into microelectronic products and find their way into phones, products, and more."



Increasing specialization in manufacturing has shifted production and design, whereby companies focus exclusively on hardware or software development, known as the foundry model.

Dr. Chiang detailed the roles that educational institutions play. Universities synergize with companies to "bridge fundamental research advances with commercially deployed technology." Universities also serve as economic drivers by create knowledge and job opportunities. He recommended that curricula focus on "expanded use of hands on training, online learning, community colleges, and engagement with the industry." Furthermore, Dr. Chiang emphasized "substantially increasing the number of scholarships, fellowships and funded development programs."



EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING

Troops march during a full honors procession in Arlington, Va., on Veterans Day last month. The BRAVE Act would help veterans reenter civilian life by connecting them to the resources needed to find fulfilling, good-paying careers, Norcross writes.

(Photo: Sarah Silbiger/Bloomberg/Pool)

SKILLED TRADES OFFER A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

BRAVE Act would connect millions of ex-servicemembers to good-paying, family-sustaining jobs

Every year, an estimated 200,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces leave military service to reenter civil society in America. Around 3 million veterans served in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and each of them has faced this difficult transition. I wrote the Bringing Registered Apprenticeships to Veterans Education, or BRAVE, Act, which the House unanimously passed last month, with them in mind.

I am a member of Congress and serve on the House Armed Services Committee. I am the father of a veteran. And I am also the product of a registered apprenticeship. Our veterans are highly trained and skilled, making them uniquely suited for careers in the skilled trades. The BRAVE Act was designed to help their reentry into civilian life by connecting them to the resources they need to find fulfilling, good-paying careers.

When we send our servicemembers to war, we train and equip them with the skills they need to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. We do this because we want them to succeed in whatever mission they are assigned — be it on the battlefield or rendering humanitarian aid in the wake of natural disasters. They deserve the same level of support when they leave service.

One of the best ways to help our veterans is by providing them with meaningful work opportunities. Most men and women join the Armed Services out of a desire to serve; this mission-oriented mindset is not likely to end even when their formal service does. Registered apprenticeships allow servicemembers to build promising careers for themselves while building their communities.

I still take great pride in knowing I was a small part of building enduring monuments in my community. As an electrician and graduate of a registered apprenticeship, I worked to electrify the Ben Franklin Bridge — an iconic landmark used each day by thousands of commuters and

that connects my hometown of Camden, N.J., to the city of Philadelphia across the Delaware River. By participating in registered apprenticeships, our veterans can pursue careers that are meaningful in the sense of service but also beneficial individually.

Indeed, the latest data by the Department of Labor shows that 92 percent of registered apprentices remain employed after graduation. The program would allow veterans to “earn while they learn” — or get paid while acquiring the new skills of the trade and avoiding mountains of student debt. Furthermore, the average starting salary for graduates of a registered apprenticeship is \$72,000. To put that in context, the average starting salary for graduates of Brown University — an Ivy League school — is around \$74,000. (Starting salaries for registered apprenticeships beat those of traditional four-year college graduates by nearly \$20,000.)

The pipeline and demand for veterans in the trades already exist. Programs like Helmets to Hardhats help connect veterans with careers in construction. But veterans are not consistently educated about these opportunities — and the BRAVE Act would change that. It would connect veterans to resources that are eligible for VA education benefits, ensuring that when veterans begin considering their career transition, they are provided with up-to-date and easily accessible information about registered apprenticeship programs.

It's also worth noting that the BRAVE Act passed during National Apprenticeship Week and the same week that President Joe Biden signed the bipartisan infrastructure bill into law. The time is now to connect the millions of veterans to the good-paying, family-sustaining jobs in the trades — which are about to receive trillions in funding to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure.

From one apprentice to the future apprentices who I hope are reading this: Consider the trades.

Your service to our country and community doesn't need to end just yet.

Through [Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses](#), The American Legion supports efforts to increase

acceptance of training and experience in seeking employment.

Norcross, Donald. "Skilled Trades Offer a Bright Future for America's Veterans." Roll Call, Roll Call, 7 Dec. 2021, <https://www.rollcall.com/2021/12/03/skilled-trades-offer-a-bright-future-for-americas-veterans/>.

Staff Meetings on Education Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division met with House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) Economic Opportunity Subcommittee (EO) majority staff to exchange introductions as well as highlight future areas of interest. The introductory meeting was followed by the monthly 4 corners briefing by HVAC and SVAC Committee staff. HVAC staff informed VE&E that the top priority for veterans' education after the REMOTE Act is the National Guard and Reserve Parity Act, which may be included in the end of year package expected in January 2022. Additionally, the next subcommittee hearings tentatively scheduled for early next year will focus on direct hiring and veterans' employment topics. HVAC and VE&E staff agreed to collaborate more closely on the veterans' employment and economic opportunities portfolio in the future. Subcommittee staff also mentioned that the VA's The Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRAAP) program is waning in popularity. Unlike the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program, VRAAP is not expected to expend all funding allocated to it. According to an earlier briefing by the VA VBA, VET TEC was on track to expend all available funds allocated to the program by the end of the second fiscal quarter.

Established in 2017 with the signing of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, VET TEC partners with technology-focused private companies to provide eligible veterans with industry training in computer software, computer programming, data processing, information science, and media applications.

The program was originally funded at \$15 million per fiscal year until 2022, but due to its immense popularity the program was expanded to \$45 million per year and offered to transitioning servicemembers through the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020. However, the program was not extended and is expected to sunset at the end of the 2022 fiscal year. The American Legion supports new and innovative training opportunities for veterans and their families that lead to gainful employment through [Resolution No. 343: Support Student-Veterans Return-On-Investment Education Outcomes](#).

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division contacted a spouse of a veteran in California State seeking information on scholarships and/or student aid. VE&E staff shared resources on scholarships available through The American Legion and those available through California State. VE&E staff routinely assist servicemembers, veterans, and their families with education-related issues or questions. This is an important function as it provides insight for VE&E into the current problems the military-connected community is facing.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a Congressional Hearing by the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials (Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure) on “*Leveraging IIJA: Plans for Expanding Intercity Passenger Rail.*”

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law last month and represents one of the largest investments into transportation in modern history. Not only does the bill reauthorize many rail, highway, and other transit programs for the next 5 years, it also ushers in a new era of transportation expansion and investment.



According to Representative Payne, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, the bill authorized \$35 billion for intercity transportation programs to facilitate better and safer systems. Many of the current transportation systems, especially in the Northeastern Corridor, are in disrepair. Much of the tunnels and infrastructure supporting current rail and subterranean transportation systems were completed in the 1800 or 1900s. Those antiquated structures must be identified and revitalized. The bill also authorizes \$66 billion for the national rail system with Amtrak receiving \$22 billion directly and another \$44 billion allocated for grant programs for intercity transportation across the country.

Many of the Subcommittee members hailed the legislation as a much-needed infusion of resources into an essential understaffed and underfunded system. Ranking member Crawford remarked that while expansion of the existing infrastructure is important, Amtrak should first focus on fixing longstanding issues. He added, “Amtrak must strive to use taxpayer money responsibly.”



Mr. Stephen Gardner, President of Amtrak, welcomed the bill and its focus on rail. According to Mr. Gardner, current ridership levels are back up to 70%, but the future outlook of ridership is still uncertain due to the ongoing pandemic. Approximately 5% of Amtrak employees are not vaccinated and may be let go in accordance with the new vaccine mandate. As a result, Amtrak is expected to reduce service in January due to understaffing issues but should return to normal operations by March, 2022. The health and safety of employees and railway riders remains a top priority. He also stated that Amtrak is dedicated to using U.S. based businesses and providers for equipment and services.

**PRESS
RELEASE**

**TRONE BILL TO PROTECT
EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR
STUDENT VETERANS DURING
COVID-19 PASSES HOUSE**

Representative David Trone (MD-06) applauded the passage of the Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions (REMOTE) Act, which he introduced alongside Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (CA-41) and Economic Opportunity Subcommittee Chairman Mike Levin (CA-49). The Act will protect education benefits for veterans amid the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.



By law, the Department of Veterans Affairs is required to make significant cuts to the housing benefits afforded to student veterans who are taking classes remotely. As student veterans transitioned to online coursework during the pandemic, many remained in campus housing during shelter-in-place orders. Nonetheless, under the existing law, these students lost their housing benefits. In response, Congress took action to prevent cuts to veterans' benefits as higher education institutions continued remote learning. The REMOTE Act will preserve this modification through June 2022.

“The REMOTE Act ensures that student veterans receive the education benefits they need during an ever-changing and evolving pandemic,” said Congressman Trone, Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. “I applaud my colleagues in the House for supporting this important legislation to protect the benefits of those who served our country. I want to thank Chairman Takano and Chairman Levin for their leadership. Together, we are giving student veterans a greater opportunity to achieve academic success.”



“When schools rightly shifted their classes online due to the pandemic, many student veterans saw a major reduction in housing benefits,” said Chairman Takano. “Last year, we passed my emergency Student

Veteran Coronavirus Response Act to ensure these veterans could access their full benefits, but as it is set to expire this month, it is clear that more relief is needed. That is why I am so pleased the House of Representatives passed Rep. Trone's REMOTE Act today to ensure that our student veterans don't lose the critical housing benefits they have earned. I want to thank Rep. Trone for leading this effort to safeguard student veterans' benefits during this pandemic.”

“Trone Bill to Protect Education Benefits for Student Veterans During COVID-19 Passes House.” WCBC, WCBC Radio, 8 Dec. 2021, <https://www.wbcbradio.com/?news=trone-bill-to-protect-education-benefits-for-student-veterans-during-covid-19-passes-house>.



HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

VETERANS FIND A HOME IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPLEX

When Thomas Wheeler learned his application for a unit at Bakersfield's newest affordable housing complex had been accepted, he practically jumped for joy.

The retired groundskeeper and Air Force veteran, who served in Thailand from 1972 to 1973, had

struggled to find a place to live that worked with his budget. He and his wife, Angie, currently live in a 364-square-foot studio apartment, so small he

said two people cannot pass each other in the kitchen and bedroom areas.

"My wife and I right now are just so excited about getting in here," Wheeler said. "After I got off the phone I was like, 'yeah, yeah let's go!'"

Wheeler was so excited to move in, he showed up a day early to his future home to attend the Thursday grand opening of the Residences at East Hills, an 81-unit affordable housing complex developed by the Housing Authority of the



County of Kern. With 44 units set aside for veterans and the remaining units reserved for those who earn below 60 percent of the area's median income, the new complex is the latest attempt to bring affordable housing to an area that sorely needs it.

Some reports indicate no affordable units are available in northeast Bakersfield, according to Housing Authority Assistant Director Heather Kimmel. The Housing Authority has been working on the more than \$20 million project for the last five years, hoping to ease the rental burden on Kern County's many veterans.

"When you travel across that Kern County line, you see a sign. It says, 'Kern County: Where we honor veterans,'" Kimmel said during the grand opening ceremony. "This is yet another example of how true that is for our community."

The Bakersfield-based California Veterans Assistance Foundation has placed 73 veterans on its by-name list, which is typically used to track homelessness.

"We are confident that through the work of our community, through my staff who does an amazing job, that we will get to the point where veterans in our community that need housing, they will knock on our door and we will get them immediately housed," said Deb Johnson, president and CEO of the foundation.

The Housing Authority's development falls in line with the state's goal of constructing more

affordable housing so much so that Lourdes Castro Ramírez, secretary of the state's Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, woke up at 4 a.m. to catch a flight to Bakersfield for the grand opening.

"The last two years have been very difficult for all of us, from the loss of loved ones to the economic fallout of this pandemic, and we are still not completely out of this pandemic," she said. "Fundamental to this recovery is our ability to expand affordable housing, our ability to create more housing that is deeply affordable to working families, to families on fixed incomes, to veterans that need that stability and that level of support."

She added that the state's budget includes \$10 billion for housing and \$12 billion to address homelessness.

In Bakersfield, at least a few units of affordable housing are still available. The Housing Authority is still accepting applications for the Residences at East Hills. Rent ranges from \$387 to \$895 depending on income. The complex features units with between one and three bedrooms.



MORGENsmorgen@bakersfield.com, S. A. M. (2021, December 10). Veterans find a home in New Affordable Housing Complex. The Bakersfield Californian. Retrieved December 10, 2021, from https://www.bakersfield.com/news/veterans-find-a-home-in-new-affordable-housing-complex/article_801897c0-594f-11ec-a388-a7299707c06b.html.

Staff Meetings on Homelessness Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Bidders' Conference Webinar held by the National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC). The purpose of the webinar is to provide an introduction of the HVRP to prospective applicants who may not be familiar with the program and explore implementation, best practices, and challenges participants face based off of the 2021 Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).

Meet Your Facilitators: The NVTAC Team



**Ade Adeniji, Project Manager
co-lead BOS**
aadeniji@manhattanstrategy.com



**Cindy Borden
Lead ATL, PHL, SF**
cborden@nchv.org



**Nicole LaCorte-Klein
co-lead BOS/CHI**
nlacorteklein@atlasresearch.us



**Cori Di Biase
Lead DAL**
cdibiase@manhattanstrategy.com



**Amy Miller
co-lead CHI**
amiller@atlasresearch.us

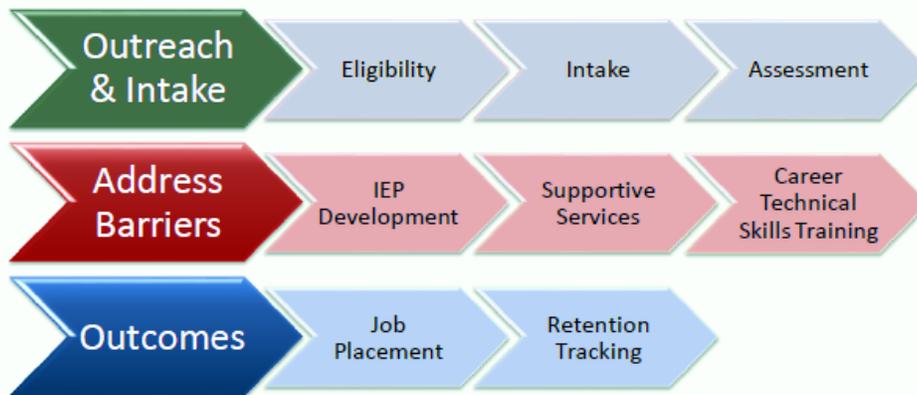
The NVTAC, funded by the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) provides training, technical assistance to HVRP grantees along with organizations that assist homeless veterans find employment prior to new FOA grant period publication starting in January 2022.

The HVRP, a grant administered by DOL-VETS, also consists of the Homeless Female Veterans' and Homeless Veterans' with Families Program (HFVWWF), and the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP). Together, the HVRP's purpose is tackle homelessness and workforce challenges by providing employment and supportive services that reintegrate homeless veterans into the labor force, and address the multifaceted problems they face.

In order to qualify for funding, prospective grantees must offer "Continuum of Services" by developing measurable goals in their program that meet the local needs of veterans to ensure they are able to find gainful employment as illustrated in the slide below.



HVRP Continuum of Services



15

FOA's provide detail eligibility and program requirements from required documents needed to how the review and submission process works. Eligible Veterans must have served at least one day of active duty and must not have been dishonorably discharged. National Guard and Reserve members must have been federally activated, not including training.

Veterans having experienced homelessness at any point 60 days prior to HVRP enrollment and veterans at risk of experiencing homelessness within two weeks are also eligible. Additionally, veterans transitioning or recently released from incarceration, veterans participating in HUD-VASH, Tribal HUD-VASH, SSVF programs, or veterans receiving assistance from the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 also qualify. Lastly, veterans at risk of homelessness within 60 days of enrollment are eligible, however are limited to 10% of total enrollments .

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a "4 Corners" meeting with staffers from the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs to discuss upcoming congressional business relevant to homeless veteran policy. During the meeting, the American Legion discussed its tracking of the West LA Veterans Affairs Campus Master Plan. including the plan's use of enhanced use leasing and utilization of service-disabled veteran owned small businesses for the projects contracting.



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division engaged with a homeless veteran in need from South Carolina who contacted the Legion in need of assistance. Staff from the Veterans Education and Employment Division are working with the veteran to connect them with local resources.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division conducted rehearsals for the testimony on the VA home loan program titled “Removing Barriers to Veteran Home Ownership.” Members of congress invited The American Legion to testify on how VA homebuyers can be competitive in a difficult housing market.

Excerpt from the oral testimony remarks that, “The VA has guaranteed more than 26 million home loans for veterans and their families since the program started in 1944 with the signing of the Servicemen’s Readjusted Act. In 2020 alone, 1 million home loans were guaranteed. That year we witnessed unprecedented growth in the housing market, exacerbated by the pandemic. While inventories of homes dwindled, potential homebuyers were forced to compete at a level not seen in two decades. Housing prices increased nearly 20% from June 2020 to January 2021. For VA Homebuyers, the market was untenable.

Despite the record-breaking year for VA home loans, the proportion of VA home loans relative to other loans decreased by 10.5%. Homebuyers with cash offers and those using conventional loans boxed out servicemembers and veterans using VA Home Loans. What makes the VA home loan less attractive to sellers? According to a 2021 survey by the National Association of Realtors, 89% of sellers were likely to accept an offer from a buyer with a conventional loan, and only 30% were likely to accept an offer from a buyer using a VA loan”

**!NEWS
ALERT!**



The Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS) and the National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center (NVTAC) are pleased to invite you to a [Bidders' Conference for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program \(HVRP\) Funding Opportunity Announcement \(FOA\)](#).

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION:

**Serve veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness?
Provide workforce development or employment services?
If so, have you considered applying for an HVRP grant?**

During the upcoming Bidders' Conference Virtual Events, DOL-VETS and NVTAC staff will provide a comprehensive overview of the HVRP program, the types of organizations and partners that are often successful and steps your organization can take to prepare to submit a competitive application.

For more information, please email contact@nvtac.org



**SMALL BUSINESS
& GOVERNMENT
CONTRACTING**

*Biden-Harris Administration Announces Reforms
To Increase Equity And Level The Playing Field
For Underserved Small Business Owners*

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES REFORMS TO INCREASE EQUITY AND LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR UNDERSERVED SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

The federal government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world, buying everything from software and building construction to financial and asset management—making its procurement a powerful tool to advance equity and build wealth in underserved communities. Despite this, less than 10 percent of federal agencies’ total eligible contracting dollars typically go to small disadvantaged businesses (SDB), a category under federal law for which Black-owned, Latino-owned, and other minority-owned businesses are presumed to qualify. Moreover, while women own roughly 20 percent of all small businesses economy-wide, less than 5 percent of federal contracting dollars go to women-owned small businesses.

Increasing federal spending with underserved businesses not only helps more Americans realize their entrepreneurial dreams, but also narrows persistent wealth disparities. According to new analysis from the White House Council of Economic Advisers, based on data provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA), differences in business ownership account for 20 percent of the wealth gap between average white and Black households.

For this reason, at the June 1 centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre, President Biden announced a bold new goal: increasing the share of contracts going to small disadvantaged businesses by 50 percent by 2025 – an unprecedented target projected to translate to an additional \$100 billion to SDBs over 5 years. The announcement built on the President’s Day One Executive Order 13985, which directed agencies to work to make contracting opportunities more readily available to all eligible firms and to remove barriers faced by underserved individuals and communities.

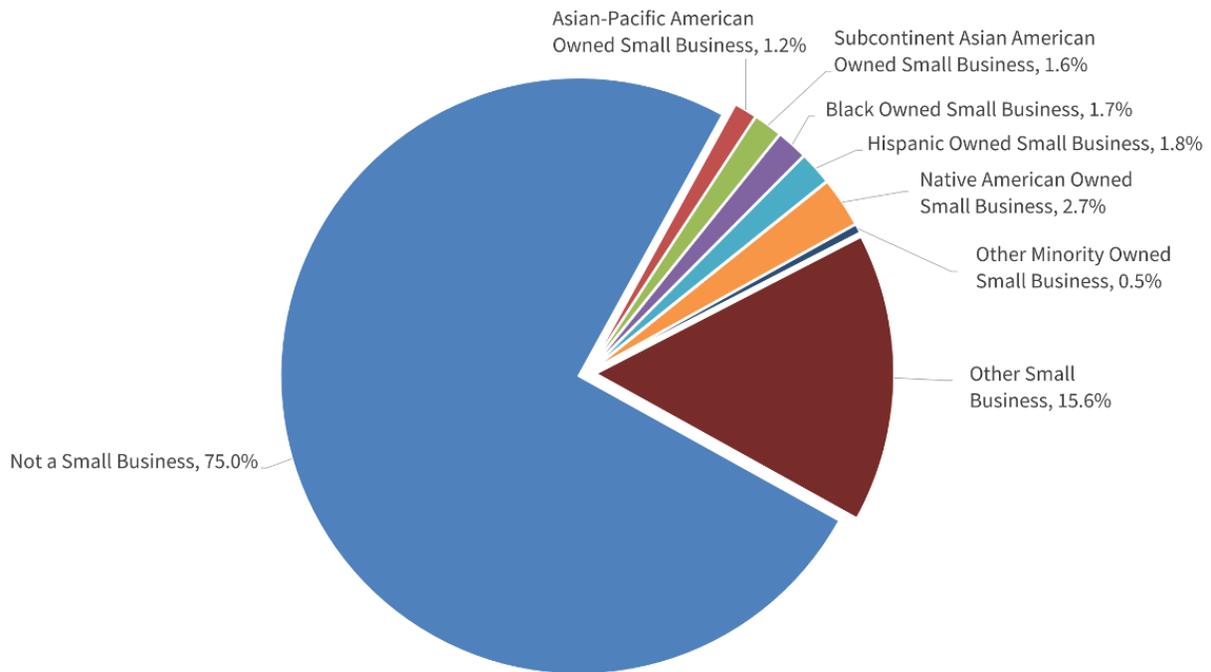
In addition, on November 18, the Administration launched its President’s Management Agenda (PMA) Vision. The third PMA priority—

managing the business of government to build back better—recognizes that fostering lasting improvements in the Federal acquisition system can create opportunities for underserved communities. The PMA Vision states, “By creating more opportunities for all types of businesses and underserved entrepreneurs to compete for Federal contracts, the Federal marketplace can serve as a platform to create a more equitable economy.”

Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing a set of reforms to the federal procurement process to help meet the President’s ambitious target of increasing the share of federal contracts to SDBs, advance the President’s Management Agenda, and increase opportunity for all underserved businesses. Today’s actions include:

- **For the first time, asking agencies to increase their goals so that governmentwide spending results in 11 percent of contracting dollars being awarded to small disadvantaged businesses, up from the current statutory goal of 5 percent.** This is the first step towards meeting the President’s goal of ensuring that 15% of federal contracts go to SDBs by 2025.
- **Releasing, for the first time, disaggregated data of federal contracting spend by race/ethnicity of business owner, a powerful transparency and management tool.**
- **Implementing major changes to the federal government’s use of “category management” to boost contracting opportunities for underserved small businesses.**
- **Increasing the number of new entrants to the Federal marketplace and reversing**

FY 2020 Federal Contracting¹ by Race² and Business Size



1. Includes only small-business-eligible dollars (\$559 billion in FY 2020). This includes all Federal contracts except those excluded by SBA's Goaling Guidelines. This data does not apply the double-credit and subcontracting adjustments required by statute for SBA's annual scorecard.

2. Racial and ethnic categories are reflected here as they appear in the System for Award Management when an entity registers to do business with the government. Classifications are self-reported. The other small business category reflects those firms who did not report as being minority-owned.

- **declines in the small business supplier base.**
- **Adopting key management practices to drive accountability and institutionalize achievement of small business contracting goals.**

For the first time, asking agencies create ambitious goals in order to exceed the existing statutory goal of 5 percent by spending 11 percent of Fiscal Year 2022 governmentwide procurement dollars on small disadvantaged businesses. Small business contracting goals are a key element of our federal procurement system, driving priorities for nearly 40,000 federal contracting officers. Today's action will put agencies on a path to meeting the President's goal of increasing annual SDB spend from an average of 9.8 percent over the last 5 years to 15 percent by FY 2025. The reforms we are putting in place now will help ramp up the amount of money going to SDBs in the coming years and keep us on a path to meet the President's goal of an

additional \$100 billion to SDBs over the next five years.

Over the course of the coming year, the federal government will also update goals for other "socioeconomic" categories of small businesses, including women-owned small businesses, service-disabled veteran owned small businesses, and HUBZone businesses.

Releasing, for the first time, disaggregated data of federal contracting spend by race/ethnicity of business owner, a powerful transparency and management tool. Today, the Administration is releasing, for the first time, disaggregated data of federal contracting spend by business owner race/ethnicity. For years, the federal government has relied on topline data to benchmark contracting spend to small businesses and socioeconomic small businesses. This data, while insightful, offers only a partial illustration of performance in reaching certain groups. For example, while we typically award roughly 10 percent of federal contracting dollars to SDBs, in

FY 2020 just 1.7 percent went to Black-owned small businesses, 1.8 percent went to Hispanic-owned small businesses, and 2.8 percent went to Asian American and Pacific Islander-owned

small businesses. Similarly, high-level data obscures inequitable geographic distribution of federal contracts. Beginning with FY 2020 data, the federal government will publicly release this disaggregated data on an annual basis so that procurement officials, business owners, and the American people can use it as a tool to track equity and progress over time. This data will also allow agencies to assess their performance across industries and sectors, helping them better target interventions to areas with the greatest opportunity for growth.

Introducing major changes to the federal government’s use of “category management” to boost contracting opportunities for underserved small businesses. In recent years, the federal government has organized its buying practices for the majority of its contract spending using stewardship principles of “category management.” This process helps agencies buy as an organized entity, rather than as thousands of independent buyers, which allows agencies to make informed buying decisions and eliminate redundant buying choices. However, an analysis of category management spending since 2017 reveals that “socioeconomic firms, a group that includes SDBs, women-owned, service disabled veteran-owned, and HUBZones, have received a proportionally lower share of contracts. To address this unintended consequence and increase support for these businesses, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is issuing revised guidance on the use of category management to help federal agencies conduct more equitable buying practices. This guidance:

- Gives agencies automatic “credit” under category management for all awards made to socioeconomic small businesses, beginning in FY 2022.
- Reinforces the importance of small business goal achievement as a key to advancing equity in procurement, especially when

coupled with category management stewardship practices.

- Ensures that use of “Best in Class” solutions is balanced with decentralized contracts and other strategies that are necessary to increase diversity within agency supplier bases.
- Strengthens the voice for small business equity considerations in category management governance by making the SBA and the Department of Commerce (parent agency of the Minority Business Development Agency) voting members of the Category Management Leadership Council, the interagency governing body for category management activities.

Adopting key management practices to drive accountability and institutionalize achievement of small business contracting goals. Advancing equity for socioeconomic businesses firms requires focused attention, proactive engagement, and execution by agency senior leadership. On November 18, the Administration launched the President’s Management Agenda (PMA) Vision, which recognizes that fostering lasting improvements in the Federal acquisition system can create opportunities for underserved communities. Consistent with this vision, the federal government will:

- **Hold leaders accountable for meeting small business contracting goals.** OMB is directing all agencies to include progress towards achievement of each of the socioeconomic small business goals as evaluation criteria in all performance plans for Senior Executive Service (SES) managers that oversee the acquisition workforce or agency programs supported by contractors.
- **Ensure agency small business contracting offices have direct reporting lines to senior leadership.** Federal Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSBDUs) play an important role by working with agency acquisition officials to increase contracting with small businesses;

assisting small businesses in obtaining payments from an agency; and providing advice to agency senior leadership to expand access to the supplier base. OMB is directing all federal agencies to report to SBA and OMB their plans to ensure that OSBDUs have direct access to senior leadership.

Increasing the number of new entrants to the federal marketplace to reverse the decline in the small business supplier base. A recent report found that the number of new small business entrants to federal procurement decreased by 60 percent over the past decade. This trend is directly at odds with the Administration's equity goals and not only means fewer growth opportunities for small businesses, but weakened diversity and resilience of the federal supplier base. To reverse this trend, the Biden-Harris administration is tasking agencies with benchmarking the inclusion of new entrants in the federal marketplace and developing strategies for diversifying the small business supplier base. Agencies will work to increase transparency around future contracting

opportunities to ensure that more small businesses have the opportunity to compete for them and enter the federal marketplace.

The American Legion supports efforts to increase economic and business opportunities for veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran owned small businesses, including changes in policy to provide veteran-owned small businesses with more opportunities to work with the federal government. This commitment can be demonstrated in [Resolution No. 55: Mandatory Use Of The Veterans First Contracting Program.](#)

"Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Reforms to Increase Equity and Level the Playing Field for Underserved Small Business Owners." *FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Reforms to Increase Equity and Level the Playing Field for Underserved Small Business Owners*, The United States Government, 1 Dec. 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/02/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-reforms-to-increase-equity-and-level-the-playing-field-for-underserved-small-business-owners/>.

UTACOMNAV PROGRAM SELECTED TO ASSIST VETERAN AND MILITARY SPOUSE BUSINESSES

The University of Texas at Arlington will establish the UTA Community Navigator (UTAComNav) Program with a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to support veteran and military spouse businesses with entrepreneurship education, small business technical assistance, loan preparation, access to capital/capital readiness, corporate and federal contracting and networking.

UTAComNav was selected by Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) to support its Community Navigator Pilot Program. UTAComNav will specifically work with the IVMF in support of the veteran community through the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC). IVMF was named as one of only eight Tier 1 grantees, selected as part of the Biden-Harris

Administration's \$100 million Community Navigator Pilot Program.

"We are excited to be working with IVMF," said Edmund Prater, VBOC executive director.

Ashten Simmons, a military spouse described by Prater as a "skilled administrator," will lead the UTAComNav program.

"We will expand our efforts in reaching the underserved veteran entrepreneur community and providing them the support and resources that our veteran small businesses need," Simmons said. "As a veteran spouse, I am personally familiar with the issues faced by veterans and their families, and I am excited to collectively further our impact to those veteran small businesses that need it the most."

Michael Haynie, Syracuse University’s vice chancellor for Strategic Initiatives & Innovation, Barnes Professor of Entrepreneurship and IVMF executive director, said IVMF and the UTAComNav have the potential to impact thousands of veterans and their families.

“This broadens our national impact, having developed a vast network of alumni and partners who are dedicated to meeting the unique needs of veterans and military-connected families,” Haynie said.

UTAComNav will draw on IVMF’s best practices delivering cost-free entrepreneurship programs like Boots to Business, Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans (EBV)—programs that have assisted more than 75,000 participants. During the pandemic, the IVMF also launched two new virtual entrepreneurship programs, EBV Spark and R.I.S.E. (Resilience, Innovate, Sustain, Evaluate), to help veteran and military spouse

entrepreneurs adapt their businesses to the current operating environment.

Haynie said he believes the new pilot program offers a unique solution that provides a navigation and support mechanism to strengthen the ecosystem, nurture entrepreneurial aspirations and sustain growth and success.

“The goal is for military-connected clients to receive efficient, timely and comprehensive access to the services and resources they need, where they are and when they need them in their entrepreneurial journey,” Haynie said.

The American Legion supports measures to improve the economic wellbeing of military spouses, as articulated in [Resolution No. 81: Military Spouse Employment](#). The Legion applauds efforts to bolster and promote the success of veteran owned and military-spouse owned small businesses.

“UTACOMNAV Program Selected to Assist Veteran and Military Spouse Businesses.” UTAComNav Program Selected to Assist Veteran and Military Spouse Businesses, EurekAlert!, 7 Dec. 2021, <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/937186>.

Staff Meetings on Small Business Topics

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a virtual forum by the White House titled “**Reforms to Increase Equity and Level the Playing Field for Underserved Small Business Owners**”. The event included remarks from Small Business Administration Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman, and Jason Miller, Deputy Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget.



Administrator Guzman and Deputy Director Miller highlighted the Administration’s plan to increase government spending on small, disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) to 15% by 2025. Guzman and Miller highlighted the steps the administration will take to pursue this goal. As outlined on the related White House Fact Sheet, these steps include:



- Releasing, for the first time, disaggregated data of federal contracting spend by race/ethnicity of business owner, a powerful transparency and management tool.

- Implementing major changes to the federal government’s use of “category management” to boost contracting opportunities for underserved small businesses.
- Increasing the number of new entrants to the Federal marketplace and reversing declines in the small business supplier base.
- Adopting key management practices to drive accountability and institutionalize achievement of small business contracting goals.



The National Veterans Employment and Education Division held a meeting with Daniel Restivo, Public Affairs Specialist at USAID, to discuss, among other economic matters, efforts to increase the agency’s use of service-disabled veteran owned small businesses within its prime and subcontracting spending. The American Legion

and Restivo will be working together to include USAID in future economically focused Legion activities and events.

The National Veterans Employment and Education Division attended a virtual hearing titled “Uncharted Waters: Challenges Posed by Ocean Shipping Supply Chains” held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce. Witnesses included: John Butler, CEO of World Shipping Council; Greg Regan, President of Transportation Trades Department of AFL-CIO; Paul Doyle, CEO of Coastal Automotive; and Norman Krug, CEO of Preferred Popcorn.



John Butler, CEO of the World Shipping Council, highlighted four main points in his opening testimony. These included the facts that (1) the supply chain congestion is global and the Covid 19 pandemic has only intensified it, (2) the number of ocean carriers is not the problem, but instead getting ships into port and processed, (3) there has been a record amount of cargo being transported in the past 18 months, and (4) that carriers are receiving mixed messages from public officials – given that the administration wants to increase port traffic while congress introduces legislation that would restrict access.



Greg Regan, President of Transportation Trades Department at AFL-CIO, highlighted how no lone actor is solely responsible for the ongoing situation at America’s ports. However, Regan noted that while the Covid-19 pandemic worsened the problem, long-term structural issues and inefficiencies are also to blame for the current supply chain crisis. Regan emphasized that shortsighted industry practices, not worker-related, have left the supply chain vulnerable. Chief among these practices is precision scheduled railroading,

which Regan contends is an outdated model that cannot effectively manage traffic at American ports. Regan also argued that employers fail to provide incentives to retain good workers.

Paul Doyle, CEO of Coastal Automotive, a Michigan-based auto parts firm, highlighted how the automotive industry has been impacted by many issues, including COVID-19, labor shortages, trucking demands, and labor costs. Storage and transportation costs have been harmful and have led to severe challenges for parties involved within his company's supply chain.



Norman Krug, CEO of Preferred Popcorn, spoke about the struggles his Nebraska-based firm is experiencing as a result of the Covid-19 supply chain crisis. Krug highlighted how reliance on international markets in addition to the closing of the global theater industry during the pandemic led to immense economic hardship for his business. Additionally, Krug discussed how the global freight crisis and logistical challenges have been devastating for the company. These challenges have led to strained relationships and higher costs to consumers.

SPOTLIGHT

SBA NEWS RELEASE

**PRESS OFFICE: Administrator Guzman
Announces Members of the Council on
Underserved Communities**



U.S. Small Business
Administration



John W. Rogers, Jr. and 13 Distinguished Leaders Appointed to Reconvened CUC, Develop Recommendations to Address Nation's Pressing Challenges Affecting Underserved Small Business Owners

U.S. Small Business Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman announced the leaders who will serve on the reconvened Council on Underserved Communities (CUC) authorized under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), including its appointed Chair, John W. Rogers Jr., Chairman, and Co-CEO of Ariel Investments, LLC.

The CUC will work to further the equity priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration by making programmatic and policy recommendations to Administrator Guzman and the SBA to increase access and opportunity across SBA's programs and initiatives to help level the playing field for all of America's entrepreneurs.

"I look forward to relaunching the CUC and working with Chairman Rogers and our other newly-appointed members to support President Biden's commitment to address equity as we build our economy back better," said Administrator Guzman. "An economic recovery for all of us means that we must do everything we can to help all of our small businesses and innovative startups emerge from the pandemic stronger and more resilient. SBA is committed to ensuring our underserved entrepreneurs can gain access to capital, markets, and networks to grow their businesses."

"Small and minority-owned businesses have faced extraordinary challenges over the last two years," said John W. Rogers Jr., Chairman of the CUC. "Tackling economic inequality and strengthening our minority business community through business opportunity is more important than ever. Together, with Administrator Guzman and this passionate and impressive group of thought leaders, advocates and entrepreneurs, the CUC will work closely with the small business community to create equitable access to the resources they need, which include both capital and customers."

Drawing from the nation's most diverse and accomplished small business owners, community leaders, and advocates, the CUC membership represents the voices and interests of America's diverse small business owners, including those in disadvantaged groups such as women and within communities of color. Together, they will work to promote public investment and policy formation to address the barriers facing underserved small businesses.

Read more about the CUC members below. Additional information about the CUC can be found at www.sba.gov/CUC. The SBA will announce additional CUC members in the coming weeks as well as upcoming public meeting dates.

CUC members being announced today are as follows:

- CUC Chairman, John W. Rogers Jr., Chairman and Co-CEO of Ariel Investments, LLC
- Beatriz Acevedo, CEO and Co-Founder, Suma Wealth
- Clarence Anthony, CEO and Executive Director, National League of Cities
- Maggie Arvedlund, CEO and Founding Partner, Turning Rock Partners
- David Clunie, Executive Director, Black Economic Alliance
- Steve Grossman, CEO, Initiative for a Competitive Inner City
- Chris James, President and CEO, The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development
- Domenika Lynch, Executive Director, Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program
- Veronica Maturino, CEO, Our Native American Business Network
- Ying McGuire, CEO and President, National Minority Supplier Development Council
- Justin Nelson, Co-Founder and President, National LGBT Chamber of Commerce
- Joseph C. Sharpe Jr., Director of Veterans Employment & Education Division, The American Legion
- Ché Ruddell-Tabisola, Founder and Owner, BBQ Bus Catering Co

- Chiling Tong, President and CEO, The National Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship
- Candace Waterman, President and CEO, Women Impacting Public Policy

About the Council on Underserved Communities

Established in 2010, the Council on Underserved Communities provides advice, ideas, and opinions on SBA programs, services, and issues of interest to small businesses in underserved communities. The 20 members of the federal advisory committee will serve as an essential connection between the SBA and underserved small businesses to work toward creating new and insightful initiatives to spur economic growth, job creation, competitiveness, and sustainability across all communities.



About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations.

To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.



CAREER FAIRS

NEW FEDERAL HIRING AUTHORITY

December 15, 2021

3:00 PM-4:00 PM

Join the Military Spouse Professional Network, Joining Forces, Office of Personnel Management and the Department of Veterans Affairs for a three-part information session on military spouse employment opportunities within the Federal government.

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

The American Legion is working on future virtual workshops and career fairs.

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



LEGISLATION TRACKING

EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 5676 - PREP Act: This bill establishes, within the Bureau of Prisons, an Office of Prison Education. The office must provide educational services to incarcerated individuals, including veterans, in federal prisons and correctional institutions. It would also require the office to inform eligible incarcerated veterans of their earned VA educational benefits.

Status: Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

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

H.R. 5545 - Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions (REMOTE) Act: This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/08/21 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget

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

H.R. 5509: Student Veteran COVID-19 Protection Act of 2021: This draft bill would extend expiring provisions established to support student veterans using educational entitlements during the pandemic.

Status: 10/08/21 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

S. 1480 - Recognizing Military Service in PSLF Act: This bill would allow service members who pause their student loan payments while deployed or on extended active-duty orders to count that period of time toward their PSLF progress – which is currently not allowed.

Status: 4/29/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

[Resolution No. 101 Support for Continuation of Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#)

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

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

[Resolution No. 349: Support Legislation to Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)

S. 1607 - Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021: This bill would improve veterans' access to information about higher education and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore benefits that veterans use at schools subject to civil enforcement.

Status: 05/13/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

[Resolution No. 327: Support further Assessment and Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning to Enable Veterans to Make Informed Education Choices](#)

H.R. 2587 - SERVE Act: This bill would improve the ability of veterans with medical training to assist the United States in response to national emergencies by implementing programs to certify and credential veterans.

Status: 7/14/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Health

[Resolution No. 338: Support Licensure and Certification of Servicemembers, Veterans and Spouses](#)

H.R. 3586 - Veteran Education Empowerment Act: This bill would reauthorize and improve a grant program to assist institutions of higher education in establishing, maintaining, improving, and operating Student Veteran Centers

Status: 5/28/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor

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

H.R. 2327 - This bill would eliminate the time period for eligibility under Survivors' And Dependents' Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs

Status: 4/28/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

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

H.R. 4233 - Student Veterans Counseling Centers Eligibility Act: This bill would award grants to community-based Veteran Centers to provide counseling and mental health services to veterans using VA higher education benefits.

Status: 9/07/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Health

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

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

S.2483- Improving Cybersecurity of Small Organizations Act of 2021: To require the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish cybersecurity guidance for small organizations, and for other purposes.

Status: 07/27/21 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

H.R.2196 - Justice for Servicemembers Act: To amend title 9 of the United States Code to prohibit predispute arbitration agreements that force arbitration of certain disputes arising from claims of servicemembers and veterans.

Status: 10/19/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law.

[Resolution No. 85: Support Employment and Reemployment Rights of National Guard and Reservists Returning from Deployment](#)

S. 94 - Hire Student Veterans Act: This bill allows a work opportunity tax credit for hiring a veteran attending an educational institution using educational assistance provided under certain programs administered by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Status: 1/28/2021 - Referred to the Committee on Finance

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

H.R.447 - National Apprenticeship Act of 2021: To amend the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly referred to as the "National Apprenticeship Act") and expand the national apprenticeship system to include apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and pre-apprenticeship registered under such Act, to promote the furtherance of labor standards necessary to safeguard the welfare of apprentices, and for other purposes.

Status: 02/25/2021 - Received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

H.R.3582 - Veteran Employment Recovery Act: This bill increases the work opportunity tax credit in 2021 for the hiring of certain disabled or unemployed veterans.

Status: 05/28/2021 – Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means
[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

S.2274 - Federal Cybersecurity Workforce Expansion Act: To authorize the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish an apprenticeship program and to establish a pilot program on cybersecurity training for veterans and members of the Armed Forces transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes.

Status: 06/24/2021 – Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.
[Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

H.R.4552 - Veterans' Agricultural Apprenticeship Act of 2021: To amend title 5, United States Code, to modify specific requirements concerning service and retirement for veterans' Preference for federal hiring.

Status: 09/08/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
[Resolution No. 25: Support and Expand Apprenticeship Opportunities for Servicemembers](#)

H.R.143 - HERO Transition from Battlespace to Workplace Act of 2021: To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to encourage private employers to hire veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the reasonable efforts an employer may make under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act with respect to hiring veterans, and for other purposes.

Status: 03/08/2021 – Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
[Resolution No. 354: Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program](#)

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 2190 - Helping Homeless Veterans Act of 2021: This bill permanently establishes existing programs that assist homeless veterans and other veterans with special needs.

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity
[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 4515 - Small Business Development Center Cyber Training Act of 2021: This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require cyber certification for small business development center counselors.

Status: 7/19/2021 - Referred to the House Committee on Small Business
[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

S.1687 - Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2021: This bill requires the Small Business Administration to establish a program for certifying at least 5 or 10% of the total number of employees of a small business development center to provide cybersecurity planning assistance to small businesses.

Status: 5/18/2021 – Introduced in the Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship
[Resolution No. 12: Cybersecurity Protections for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses](#)

H.R.5354 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act: This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Introduced in the House Committee on Ways and Means

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

S. 2812 - Veterans Jobs Opportunity Act: This bill would establish a small startup tax credit for veterans, military spouses, army reservists and national guard members seeking to start small businesses.

Status: 9/27/2021 – Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance

[Resolution No. 14: Enhancing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\) for Veteran Workers](#)

H.R.3469 - Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act of 2021: This bill provides statutory authority for the Boots to Business Program, which provides entrepreneurship training to individuals including veterans and active members of the Armed Forces, to be administered by the Small Business Administration.

Status: 11/03/2021 – Passed in the House of Representatives

[Resolution No. 222: Reaffirm Support of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development](#)

ACTION TAKEN ON LEGISLATION

EDUCATION, LICENSING & CREDENTIALING PORTFOLIO

Draft Bill - VET Student Loan Act: This draft bill would eliminate the time limits on many veterans' education benefits retroactively.

Action Taken: Bill Reviewed - Support

Status: Draft – Not yet introduced

What's Next:

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

Draft Bill - Boldly Repaying America's Veterans with Education Act (BRAVE Act): This draft bill would amend Section 108(f) of the Internal Revenue Service Code to eliminate the taxability of discharged student loans for veterans who died or were left permanently disabled as a result of their service.

Action Taken: Bill Reviewed - Support

Status: Draft – Not yet introduced

What's Next:

[Resolution No. 347: Veterans Education Debt Forgiveness](#)

Draft Legislation on Work Study for Half-Time Students: To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend eligibility for a certain work-study allowance paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to certain individuals who pursue programs of rehabilitation, education, or training on at least a half-time basis.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft Legislation on Repay MGIB: To amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft Legislation on Death GI Bill Transfer: To amend title 38, United States Code to provide for the transfer of entitlement to educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs when an eligible individual dies after approval of transfer and before transferring all of the individual's entitlement, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft Legislation on Extend FRY After Discharge: To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include spouses and children of individuals who die from a service-connected disability within 120 days of serving in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft legislation on Extend VRE Time: To extend the delimiting period for certain individuals to use educational assistance benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft Legislation on SCRA for Education: "To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to establish protections under that Act for a member of the Armed Forces who leaves a course of education, paid for with certain educational assistance, to perform certain service."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft Legislation on Student Childcare Voucher: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay to certain veterans, who receive certain educational assistance furnished by the Secretary, a weekly stipend for child care services."

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

Draft Legislation on Prohibit CH. 35 for HS: To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the use of entitlement to educational assistance under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program for secondary school education.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

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

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION PORTFOLIO

Draft Legislation on WARTAC Report: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report on the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 105: Support and Expand Warrior Transition Advancement Course \(WARTAC\)](#)

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PORTFOLIO

H.R. 5529: Veterans Justice Outreach Improvement Act: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on 10/08/2021

Status:

What's Next: Pending Action by House

[Resolution No. 145: Veterans Treatment Courts](#)

Draft Legislation on Homeless Grant Elimination of Matching: Adjustment of Grants Awarded by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs for Comprehensive Service Programs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

Draft Legislation on Eliminate Loan Limitations: To amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the Freddie Mac conforming loan limitation for loans made to veterans with remaining guaranty or insurance loan entitlement under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 314: Support Elimination of the VA Home Loan Funding Fee](#)

H.R. 5624 - SSVF Report Requirement: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the shallow subsidy program under the supportive services for veteran families program, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 10/19/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

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

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Substance Abuse Pilot: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on substance use and alcohol use disorder recovery for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

Resolution: Pending Draft Resolution

Draft Legislation on Increase Homelessness Per Diem: To amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust the rate of per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grantees that provide services to homeless veterans.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21, Provided Quote in Support of Bill on 10/13/2021

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 24: Support Funding and Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem Program](#)

Draft Legislation on Homelessness Elderly Pilot: To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on grants for care for elderly homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status:

What's Next: Waiting for formal introduction of legislation

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

H.R. 5301 - Homelessness Tech Assistance: To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide technical assistance to recipients of grants for supportive services for very low-income families in permanent housing and comprehensive service programs, and for other purposes.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 09/30/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

Resolution: Pending Draft Resolution

H.R. 5025 - Homelessness Extend HVRP: To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase and extend the authorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

Action Taken: VE&E Testified on 9/21/21

Status: 09/09/2021 Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

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

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 6/16/2021 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

What's Next: Pending Action by Committee

[Resolution No. 331: Support Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

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

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 6/23/2021 - Became Public Law No: 117-18

What's Next:

S. 2172 - Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Act: This bill improves grants, payments, and technical assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve homeless veterans.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 6/23/2021

Status: 07/28/2021 Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported without amendment favorably

What's Next: Pending Action by Senate

[Resolution No. 319: Expanding Veterans Employment and Homeless Services within the Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

SMALL BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PORTFOLIO

H.R.4433 - Veterans Entrepreneurship Act of 2021: This bill would amend the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to carry out a pilot program on issuing grants to eligible veterans to start or acquire qualifying businesses, and for other purposes. This bill would provide the opportunity for veterans to utilize their GI Bill benefits to start and finance their small businesses.

Action Taken: Supported by the National Commander in a Letter of Support submitted 08/03/2021

Status: 07/16/2021 Referred to the House Committee on Small Business

What's Next: Committee Vote

[Resolution No. 150: Expanding Post-9/11 GI Bill for Entrepreneurship](#)

H.R. 2082 - VA Supply Chain Resiliency Act: This bill would make certain improvements relating to the supply chain of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Action Taken: This bill was submitted for testimony, Letter of Support submitted 4/21/2021

Status: 5/4/2021 - Voted 22 - 6 by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

What's Next: A full vote in the U.S. House

[Resolution No. 55: Mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program](#)

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Acronym	Definition
ACE	American Council on Education
ACP	American Corporate Partners, a veteran's support organization
ATLAS	Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, a V.A. telehealth initiative
BLS	Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics
C&P	V.A.'s Compensation and Pension exam
CAVC	Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
CCME	Council of College and Military Educators
COLA	Cost-of-living adjustment
CSAAVE	California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education
DIMO	Defense Security Cooperation Agency/Defense Institute for Medical Operations
DOD	Department of Defense
DOL-VETS	Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services
EdCounsel	Higher education consulting firm
EIDL	SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GPD	V.A.'s Grant and Per Diem Program for homeless veterans
GWB	George W. Bush Higher Education Policy Work Group
HEROES ACT of 2003	Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003. Grants the Secretary of Education the authority to waive requirements that impede military borrowers' access to critical repayment protection during the war, military operation, or national emergency.
HVAC	House Veterans Affairs Committee
MCAI	American Legion's Military Credentialing Advancement Initiative
MSLP	The Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending Program
MSO	Military Support Organization
NAICU	National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
NASAA	National Association of State Approving Agencies. Responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
NAVPA	National Association of Veterans Program Administrators
NCA	V.A.'s National Cemetery Administration
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NLD	American Legion's National Legislative Division
OPM	Office of Personnel Management

PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
RBS	Risk-Based Survey Model
RPIC	Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge
S2S	Service to School, a veteran's organization
SAA	State Approving Agency, responsible for approving school funding for GI Bill
SBA	Small Business Administration
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Medical
SVA	Student Veterans of America, a veteran's organization
SVAC	Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
TAPS	Transition Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit for Gold Star Families
TEAM Act	Senate Bill 4393, to improve the provision of health care for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances from burn pits
TFA	American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USERRA	Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
VA&R	American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division
VACO	Veterans Affairs Central Office
VBA	V.A.'s Veterans Benefits Administration
VE&E	Veterans Employment and Education Division
VES	Veterans Education Success, a veteran's organization
VSO	Veterans Service Organization

RESOURCE PAGE

ABOUT TANGO LIMA PODCAST

What happens when three veterans walk into a podcast studio? Vibrant camaraderie, playful joking and hot takes ensue. Join Mark Seavey, Ashley Gorbulja-Maldonado and Jeff Daly as they explore current events, interesting trends and quirky stories of interest to the military community.

The weekly podcast is produced by The American Legion.

SUBSCRIBE

Get the latest episodes of **Tango Alpha Lima Podcast**, you can also subscribe with your favorite app directly, using the buttons below:

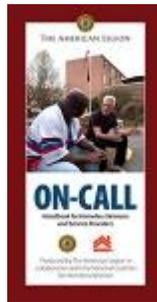




See our Publications



[Active-Duty Legal Rights](#)



[Homeless Veterans Handbook](#)



[The GI Bill and You](#)



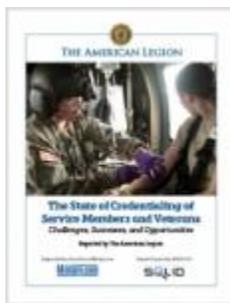
[VA Home Loans Brochure](#)



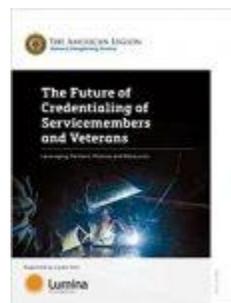
[Veterans Preference Information](#)



[VE&E Commission Awards Programs](#)



[The State of Credentialing of Service Members and Veterans](#)



[The Future of Credentialing of Servicemembers and Veterans](#)

Awards Program



The first American Legion Veterans Employment & Education Commission award was established in 1947 and honored employers across the country who had established outstanding records in the employment and retention of veterans, disabled veterans, and older workers.

- Learn how to apply for these Awards at:
<https://www.legion.org/careers/awards>
- For more information contact:
Edwin Cruz
(202) 263-5771
ecruz@legion.org

Services That Really Help

Career fairs and workshops,
guidance on education,
homeless services, small
business resources and more:



- **CAREER/EMPLOYMENT CENTER:**
 - <http://legion.monster.com/?scmdlCmscc=1>
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/resources>
- **HOMELESS VETERANS FIND HELP:**
 - <https://www.legion.org/careers/homelesstaskforce>
 - <https://www.legion.org/homelessveterans/resources>
- **VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS:**
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/statebenefits>
 - <https://www.legion.org/education/federalbenefits>
- **VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS TOOLS:**
 - <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USSBA/bulletins/2eba258>

MORE STORIES...

STRATEGIC CONSULTING PARTNERS HONORED BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AS 2021 HIRE VETS MEDALLION AWARD RECIPIENT

“Strategic Consulting Partners (SCP), an international management consulting firm headquartered in Mechanicsburg, PA, has been named by the U.S. Department of Labor as a 2021 HIRE Vets Medallion Award recipient, announces Monica Gould, founder and president.”

[Continue reading the article](#)

WHY MORE VETERANS SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“What would come to mind if someone asked you what the national brands of FedEx, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Nike and Sport Clips all had in common? It just happens that all of these brands were founded by veterans. You might be surprised to learn that veteran entrepreneurship is a powerful cog within the American economic machine.”

[Continue reading the article](#)

FORMER PHOENIX COP ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED PPP FRAUD

“A former Phoenix police officer was arrested for allegedly scamming the federal government out of \$1.2 million in PPP money”

[Continue reading the article](#)

AS PROGRAM ENDS, DOZENS OF VETERANS TO BE FORCED OUT ON THE STREETS

“Part of a program that helps cover rent for veterans is ending, meaning that dozens of retired service members will be forced out on the street.”

[Continue reading the article](#)

CAPTURE HIGHER ED ADDS SOFTWARE VETERAN TO C-SUITE

“Rajeev Arora has joined the Louisville-based enrollment management and marketing firm as chief product officer. With more than 30 years of experience growing global software companies from concept to industry-leading businesses, Arora will oversee product strategy and development at Capture, according to a news release.”

[Continue reading the article](#)

Joseph C. Sharpe, Jr., Director
Veterans Employment & Education Division
1608 K St NW., Washington, DC 20006
Phone #: 202.861.2700 ext. 2989
E-Mail: JSharpe@legion.org