

Career Profile

A weekly series devoted to providing information on career exploration

Careers After The Military - After exiting such a highly regimented environment as the service, the newly discharged soldier, sailor, marine or airman will undoubtedly be looking for a job in which they can use their talents. For most formal military personnel, the job field is wide open since basic military skills and discipline can be applied to a variety of different jobs. When considering the nearly unlimited possibilities waiting for former military personnel, you must make some tough decisions regarding money, family, and location.



CAREERS AFTER MILITARY SERVICE

The type of work

Veteran Service Officers help veterans navigate the many federal, state, and local resources and benefits available to them. Whether it's a specific question or the need to identify programs and benefits for which a veteran may be eligible, Veteran Service Officers stand by to help. They are liaisons for all veteran issues.

VSO's are trained and accredited by the US Department of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to veterans, their dependents, and survivors. This includes not only applying for federal and state benefits but also providing resources related to the following:

- Compensation
- Pension
- Health Care
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
- Education & Training
- Home Loans
- Life Insurance
- Dependents & Survivors
- Burial

Who Is Eligible

- A veteran
- A veteran's dependent
- V surviving spouse, child or parent of a deceased veteran
- An active duty military service member
- A member of the Reserve or National Guard

More Facts



Careers for Veterans - There are literally thousands of rewarding careers for veterans. Indeed, the sheer number of job openings underscores the utility of your military experience, adding yet another dimension to its value. These jobs span every discipline and are available in all corners of the country. Whether you have separated from the military recently or are many years out, there have never been more diverse and promising career options.

Education & Training

The VA pays benefits to eligible veterans, reservists, and active duty service members while they are in an approved education or training program. Time Limits: Generally, veterans have 10 years from the date they were last released from active duty to use their education and training benefits, and Reserve and National Guard members have 14 years from the date they became eligible for the program unless they leave the Selected Reserves before completing their obligation.



VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS

Yolanda Bond
Financial Investigator and
County Veteran Service Officer
Lorain County Veterans Service Commission
Lorain County Veterans Service Office, Elyria, OH

Veteran Service Officers (VSO) are veterans who stand ready to help with veteran-related needs. Veterans Service Offices have all the forms and other information a veteran may need to obtain service from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the forms for requesting State veterans' benefits. The Service Officers will assist in finding the information and resources needed to solve service-related problems.

- Q. How did you become interested in your particular field?**
- A.** During my 20 years in the Navy, I worked in the Administrative field and held secondary duties which included working with the Navy & Marine Corps Relief Society. It was a program for active duty personnel and their family to assist with financial assistance and budgeting.
- Q. How did you get to where you are today? What path did your employment journey take?**
- A.** After I retired in 2007, I wanted to continue my path working with Veterans. I was fortunate to get hired in 2008 with the Lorain County Veterans Commission as a Financial Investigator working with our county veterans. Within a year from that I was also given the opportunity to become a County Veterans Service Officer assisting veterans with filing service connected disability claims, pensions and various other claims for the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Q. What skills or certifications do you think are needed to be successful in this field?**
- A.** As a Financial Investigator and a County Veterans Service Officer you need the skills to understand your veterans with their various disabilities that they may have and how to communicate with them. Also, as a County Veterans Service Officer, you are required to be certified by the state that requires you to continue education training yearly and re-certify every 5 years.
- Q. What is the best part of your job?**
- A.** The best part of my job is speaking with those veterans who served during past wars and hearing their story of experiences they had while they were in the service.
- Q. Do you have any words of advice for someone considering a career in your field?**
- A.** To have patience and a good listening ear.

Veteran's Benefits Explained

In addition to the pensions and benefits to which a veteran may be entitled because of both public and private employment, one may also be eligible for certain benefits based on their military service.

The following is a summary of veteran's benefits and what you need to know about them:

- Major Veteran Benefit Programs
- PTSD Support
- Important Documents
- Eligibility

Major Veteran Benefit Programs

The Department of Veterans Administration operates a number of programs providing financial, medical and other assistance to veterans. For Americans who received an honorable or general discharge, there are 4 major benefit programs:

- Disability compensation
- Veteran's pension programs
- Free or low-cost medical care through VA hospitals and medical facilities
- Education Programs

There are also benefit programs concerning:

- Housing and Home Loan Guarantees
- Job Training
- Small Businesses and business loans (Through Small Business Administration)
- Counseling
- Burials and Memorials
- PTSD Support (National Center for PTSD Website)

PTSD Support

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a disorder that occurs after a life-threatening event, such as personal assault, natural disaster, or military combat. The affects of PTSD can be debilitating with symptoms ranging from severe nightmares and flashbacks to insomnia and increasing social isolation. It is common for servicemembers to deal with post-combat depression, insomnia, nightmares and family issues; however, it's the duration and intensity that differentiates PTSD. Each military branch has programs for its servicemembers, and the Department of Veterans Affairs offers free counseling sessions. For more information on PTSD or VA assistance, go to the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder website.

Important Documents:

If you are applying for a VA benefit for the first time you must submit a copy of your service discharge form (DD-214, DD-215, or for WWII veterans, a WD form), which documents your service dates and type of discharge, or give your full name, military service number, branch and dates of service.

Your service discharge form should be kept in a safe location accessible to the veteran and next of kin or designated representative. Your preference regarding burial in a national cemetery and use of a headstone provided by VA should be documented and kept with this information.

The following documents will be needed for claims processing related to a veteran's death:

1. Veteran's marriage certificate for claims of a surviving spouse or children;
2. Veteran's death certificate if the veteran did not die in a VA health care facility;
3. Children's birth certificates or adoption papers to determine children's benefits;
4. Veteran's birth certificate to determine parents' benefits.

VA Benefits Eligibility:

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based on discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment

The VA can help veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find and keep suitable employment. For veterans with serious service-connected disabilities, VA also offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Some of the services VA provides are:

- **Job Search:** Assistance in finding and maintaining suitable employment.
- **Vocational Evaluation:** An evaluation of abilities, skills, interests, and needs.
- **Career Exploration:** Vocational counseling and planning.
- **Vocational Training:** If needed, training such as on-the-job and non-paid work experience.
- **Education Training:** If needed, education training to accomplish the rehabilitation goal.
- **Rehabilitation Service:** Supportive rehabilitation and counseling services.

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www.civilianjobs.com/careeradvice/related.aspx
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