

Three Steps You Can Take to Prepare for a Career After the Military



No matter how long you have been a member of the military community, returning to civilian life can feel daunting. The military provides a structured environment and sense of community that may be hard to replicate in the next phase of your life.

Fortunately, when it comes to employment, many employers value a veteran's experience and are willing to reward that experience with preferential treatment in the hiring process. Both the federal government (and some contractors that work with the federal government) give extra consideration to veterans, and many states allow employers to consider veteran status when making hiring decisions. In addition to looking for positions with military-friendly companies, there are other steps you can take to give yourself an edge in the hiring process.

1. Attend a TAP or MySTeP workshop.

The TAP, or [Transition Assistance Program](#), helps soon-to-be veterans consider alternative careers, write their resumes, and prepare for interviews. It also helps veterans "translate" their military experience to be more readily understood by civilian employers. Furthermore, it covers financial planning and understanding the VA services that are available after transitioning. Attending a TAP workshop is typically mandatory for separating servicemembers. Our Education and Veterans Services team helps facilitate many of the TAP programs by providing information about finances and planning.

Most military installations encourage spouses to attend the TAP program. In the event a spouse cannot attend, they can utilize MySTeP. MySTeP is the Military Spouse Transition Program, and while not mandatory, it provides information and tools to military spouses as their servicemember plans to transition. It is a three-part program. The first two parts focus on joining and thriving in a military community, but the third part, [Stepping Beyond](#), focuses on preparing the family for a transition away from the military. It covers the process of separating, DoD and VA benefits, finances, health care, and employment.



2. Update your LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn is social media for working professionals. It allows you to publicly post your resume, including your work and education history, any licenses and certifications you possess, and your accomplishments. There are numerous benefits to creating and maintaining a LinkedIn profile:

- **It allows you to build a network.** When you first get LinkedIn, you can start by connecting with people you already know, then you can branch out to connect with other professionals in your desired field or those who work for a potential employer. Your connections may post job opportunities, endorse your skills, and help you connect with other professionals.
- **It lets you interact with recruiters.** Recruiters actively use LinkedIn to source applicants when they are trying to fill an open position. Provided you have an up-to-date profile, you may receive messages about job openings. You can also set your profile to say you are “open to finding a new job” for increased visibility.
- **It helps you find job postings.** Businesses often post available jobs on LinkedIn. In some cases, you may be able to apply directly from the job posting. Even if you have to go through an online application with the company itself, the LinkedIn posting may show a position description, required skills, how many other applicants you are competing against, and compensation.

Servicemembers and veterans can get a free year of LinkedIn Premium (including LinkedIn Learning) through [ID.me](#). Learn more [here](#).

3. Take advantage of your military affiliation.

Numerous employers give preference to veterans in the hiring process, including the [federal government](#). Military spouses typically do not get the same consideration after transitioning unless they are the spouse of a servicemember with a 100% disability rating or one who was killed on active duty. Those military spouses who qualify can utilize the Military Spouse Preference program.

There are also private programs that specifically focus on helping servicemembers transition into a civilian career. Some civilian employers host military or veteran affinity groups within their organization that provide support and career development opportunities to former servicemembers.

- The USO offers a free [Pathfinder Program](#) that provides transition and job search support for both servicemembers and their families.
- [Hiring Our Heroes](#) is another free program, sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, that offers fellowships and hiring support to servicemembers during their last 180 days on active duty. They also provide a program for spouses.

Separating from the military is a major life change with many moving parts. Navy Mutual is here to help. If your needs are financial, [schedule an appointment](#) with a representative to talk about your life insurance or annuity needs or give us a call at **800-628-6011**. To learn about our Education and Veterans Services offerings, including benefits counseling, click [here](#). If you're interested in viewing Navy Mutual's open positions, you can learn more [here](#).