Delaware County Veteran Workforce Needs Assessment

Pennsylvania CareerLink℠

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Submitted to Delaware County Workforce Development Board

Submitted by
Pennsylvania Career Link

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■ Executive Summary

To better serve veterans across Delaware County, Pennsylvania the Delaware County Workforce Development Board (DCWDB) launched a veteran needs assessment study. This study aimed to uncover the needs of veterans from a localized lens to help them gain access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Through labor market research and stakeholder engagement processes, several key observations were made. First and foremost, veterans across Delaware County tended to be older. Nearly 66.7% of veterans in Delaware County served in the Vietnam War, Korean War, or WWII, meaning they are of, or near, retiring age. The remaining portion of veterans, who are of working age, were difficult to find. In fact, one major challenge for service providers is their inability to locate these generations of service members. Several individuals mentioned that the county has ample resources for veterans, especially as it pertains to workforce readiness programs; however, the problem, as reported by stakeholders, is that these programs have not been able to maintain participation rates.

To aid veteran outreach efforts, individuals provided valuable insights. Two of the high priority strategies included reaching out to families of veterans and using publicly available programs, such as the Request of Names and Addresses (for service members), to gather contact information. As veterans enter into and complete these programs, service providers should help veterans communicate the skills they have gained on their resumes and in interviews.

One final observation was that organizations working to serve veterans appear to be working in silos. Several stakeholders reported that a few organizations have recently begun spearheading efforts to improve services for veterans across the counties, but these organizations require additional support from other organizations.

By cross referencing labor market information, stakeholder engagement feedback, and best practice research, the following recommendations were made:

- Include veteran families in service provision

- Connect with veterans early

- Utilize veteran expertise for program delivery

- Identify high priority employment areas based on labor market information

- Utilize a consortium model to execute a community of practice and execute services

The final recommendation, utilize a consortium model to execute a community of practice and execute services, is the highest priority recommendation. Based on observations, there are several organizations that are prioritizing services to veterans; however, it was not evident that these organizations were collaborating on many projects. Several service priorities for this coalition should include

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- Connecting with veterans early upon their departure from the military

- Focus on building and maintaining relationships with families of veterans

- Utilize public systems such as Request of Names and Addresses (RONA), the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and other systems as feasible to develop connections with veterans

- Facilitate avenues for employers to become Military Friendly companies and develop criteria to standardize the process

- Utilize veteran expertise in program and process development

- Reference Military Occupational Groups, and skills developed in those occupational groups, to connect veterans with high priority industries across the county such as Healthcare and Social Assistance, Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, Finance and Insurance, Construction, Other Services (Except Public Administration), Manufacturing, Government

Introduction

TPMA was commissioned by the Delaware County Workforce Development Board (DCWDB) to conduct a needs assessment on Veterans living in Delaware County with a focus on their ability to thrive in the workforce. This study was designed to help guide county-wide strategies to develop workforce programs that meet the needs of local veterans. DCWDB requested that TPMA use the following questions to guide the project:

- What are the attributes of Delaware County Veterans including educational attainment, skills, and work experience?

- How have secondary indicators, including mental health, drug/alcohol abuse, incarceration, etc., impacted Veterans?

- What entities (assets) are attempting to reach Veterans? Include systems, community-based organizations, educational, and faith communities.

- What are the gaps in services for Veterans?

- What are successful channels and strategies for reaching Veterans?

- What do Veterans identify as their challenges to thriving in the workforce?

To achieve its objectives, TPMA delved into several critical phases to uncover the needs of veterans across the county. During the first phase of the project, the project team used labor market information to examine the attributes of veterans, including educational attainment, skills, and work experience. Moreover, TPMA analyzed how secondary indicators such as mental health, drug/alcohol abuse, and incarceration had impacted veterans in the county.

Phase two focused on identifying and mapping various entities and assets, such as, veteran service

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organizations, community-based organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, and faith communities, that actively engaged with veterans and have the potential to provide wrap around services.

Phase three consisted of a process engaging various veteran stakeholders including community service providers, workforce agencies, families of veterans, and veterans themselves. Qualitative insights were gathered through one-on-one interviews with the specific stakeholder groups. TPMA also attended a Veteran Services Fair on Saturday, May 20th to engage with veterans, veteran families, and veteran service agencies to better understand the most pressing challenges across the county.

In the final phase of this project, TPMA reviewed information from all previous phases: a review of labor market information, mapping various service agencies across the county, and stakeholder engagements to research national programs and practices that ensure veterans secure and maintain meaningful employment opportunities. Once the information was synthesized, key opportunities were proposed to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for veterans.

■ Labor Market Information

The labor market information in this report presents an overview of Delaware County's population, industries, and occupations, among other data points, with a specific emphasis on its veteran population. Information about the demographics of veterans, education attainment, and unemployment status are a few of the topics addressed. When possible, comparisons between Pennsylvania and/or the United States are made to Delaware County, PA. Lastly, the report presents background about military occupations and attempts some connections between service member occupations and knowledge and the civilian workforce; this is important for thinking about how skills and occupations during military service translate into veteran's using that knowledge in the Delaware County workforce.

About Delaware County, Pennsylvania

The table below shows the population by various age cohorts. In 2014, the population of Delaware County was 562,9260. More recent numbers in 2019 show that the county has grown to 566,747.

According to 2019 data, the highest percentage of residents are those aged 18 and younger at 22.0%. The second largest percentage is those aged 65 or older at 16.7%. Those 65 or older have grown the most since 2014 by 1.6%. Therefore, the age of the population is both relatively young and around retirement age. Age cohorts that are in prime working age span 12.9-14.1%, which in total comes to 51.6% of the population overall. However, those 55-64 have decreased the most, 1.8%, since 2014. There are still many residents contributing to the local workforce.

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Table 1: Delaware County, PA Population by Age[1]

Population	2014	2019	Change	WIOA Report Change
18 and Younger	22.4%	22.0%	(-0.4%)	(-1.8%)
18-24	10.4%	9.9%	(-0.5%)	(-5.8%)
25-34	12.8%	12.9%	0.1%	1.6%
35-44	11.8%	12.3%	0.5%	2.5%
45-54	14.1%	12.3%	(-1.8%)	(-9.9%)
55-64	13.5%	14.1%	(-0.6%)	3.0%
65+	15.1%	16.7%	1.6%	8.6%
Prime working age (25-64)	52.1%	51.6%	(-0.5%)	(-0.8%)
Total	562,960	566,747		

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2014 and 2019, 1-Year Estimates Data Profile

[1] These age cohorts are based off of data in Delaware County Workforce Development Board's (DCWDB) Multi-Area Local Plan and shared with TPMA.

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The table below shows some information about race/ethnicity in Delaware County compared to Pennsylvania. The White population in Delaware County is 68.7%. Notably, the County is more diverse than the state overall. Delaware County's Black (21.6%) and Other (9.7%) racial/ethnic groups outpace Pennsylvania's Black (11.2%) and Other (8.3%) racial/ethnic groups. On average, Pennsylvania does have a high percentage, 7.3%, of Hispanic residents.

Table 2: Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Delaware County	Pennsylvania
White	68.7%	80.5%
Black	21.6%	11.2%
Other	9.7%	8.3%
Hispanic Origin (all Races)	3.8%	7.3%

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

In terms of poverty, Delaware County residents fare better than Pennsylvania. Delaware County's poverty percentage is 9.9% while Pennsylvania's is at 12%. The lower and upper bounds show lower or higher estimates of poverty.

Table 3: All People in Poverty, 90% Confidence interval of estimate

	Delaware County	Pennsylvania
Percent	9.9	12
Lower Bound	8.7	11.8
Upper Bound	11.1	12.2

Source: U.S. Economic Research Service

The young population in Delaware County is 13.8% impacted by poverty. This compares to 16.5% of children in the State of Pennsylvania impacted by poverty. The lower and upper bounds show lower or higher estimates of poverty.

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Table 4: Children Ages 0-17 (2019)

	Delaware County	Pennsylvania
Percent	13.8	16.5
Lower Bound	11.5	15.9
Upper Bound	16.1	17.1

Source: U.S. Economic Research Service

Educational Attainment

The table below gives some insight into educational attainment and training in the county. Many residents, 52,160, have a Bachelor's degree. This is followed by 41,810 that have some post-secondary education or experience. Those with advanced degrees make up 11,270 residents in the population.

A large portion of the population, 124,970, have on-the-job training. There are another 8,760 residents that have long-term training.

Looking ahead to 2028, each education and training category is expected to increase. On-the-job training and Bachelor's degrees are expected to increase the most by 2028.

Table 5: Demand for Highly Educated Workers[2]

Education Grouping	Employment (2018)	Projected Employment (2028)
On-the-job training	124,970	128,920
Long-term training	8,760	9,150
PS education or experience	41,810	44,120
Associate's degree	4,640	5,030
Bachelor's degree	52,160	56,220
Advanced degree	11,270	12,430

Source: Center for Workforce and Information Analysis

[2] These education grouping numbers are based off of data in Delaware County Workforce Development Board's (DCWDB) Multi-Area Local Plan and shared with TPMA.

Unemployment, Employment, and Labor Force

Labor force consists of currently employed individuals and those actively looking for work. According to 2019 data, the labor force in Delaware County's Workforce Development area is made up of 299,800 residents. That compares to 287,700 employed residents. There are 12,100 unemployed individuals in the area and the average annual unemployment rate was 4.0% in 2019.

Table 6: Annual Average Labor Force Statistics, Delaware County WDA, 2019

Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
299,800	287,700	12,100	4.0%

Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Table 7 presents more recent labor force statistics for 2020. It should be noted that the labor statistics in the table occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted local workforce statistics. The labor force did increase in 2020 compared to 2019. The unemployment rate did climb in 2020. March 2020 had an unemployment rate of 5.1% and then it jumped to 15.1% in April 2020. The unemployment rate remained high through August 2020. It trickled down slightly in September (8.4%) and October (7.2%).

Table 7: Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics, Delaware WDA, 2020

Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
January	302,700	289,600	13,000	4.3
February	304,500	291,600	12,800	4.2
March	302,800	287,200	15,600	5.1
April	297,300	252,300	44,900	15.1
May	300,700	260,700	40,000	13.3
June	299,200	257,700	41,500	13.9
July	299,500	261,300	38,200	12.7
August	296,100	264,500	31,600	10.7
September	300,100	274,900	25,100	8.4
October	296,500	275,200	21,300	7.2

Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

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Veteran Overview

The veterans of Delaware County have terms of service dating back to 1941. The totals presented in Figure 1 represent veterans across Delaware County who served during wartime.[3] Similar to the rest of the state, Vietnam era service members make up the largest proportion of service members. However, Delaware County reflects much higher proportions of this demographic. In fact, out of the 17,046 veterans tracked across the county, approximately 49.7% (8,478), served during the Vietnam war era around 1955 to 1975.[4] The Gulf War time periods make up the second largest veteran population when combined, which makes up over 6,000 veterans. Korean War veterans are a smaller proportion, followed by World War II veterans in the county.

Figure 2 tracks the same information across the state of Pennsylvania and is presented for the purposes of comparing proportions. Notably, Delaware County presents higher proportions of Vietnam War era veterans (49.71%) compared to the state proportion (45.68%), Korean War veterans (11.30%) compared to the state (8%), and World War II veterans (2.73%) compared to the state (1.77%), who tend to be of retirement age or are projected to age out of the workforce, and lower proportions of Gulf War (8/1990 to 8/2001) and (9/2001 or later) veterans.
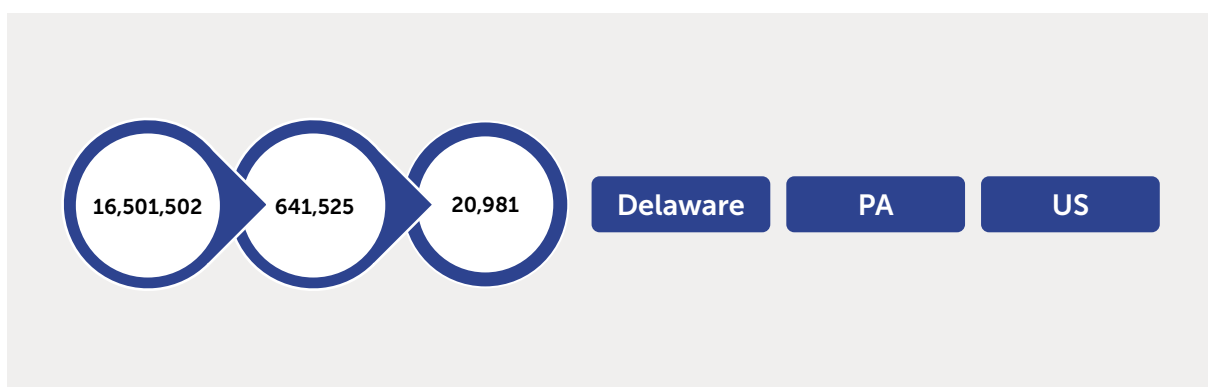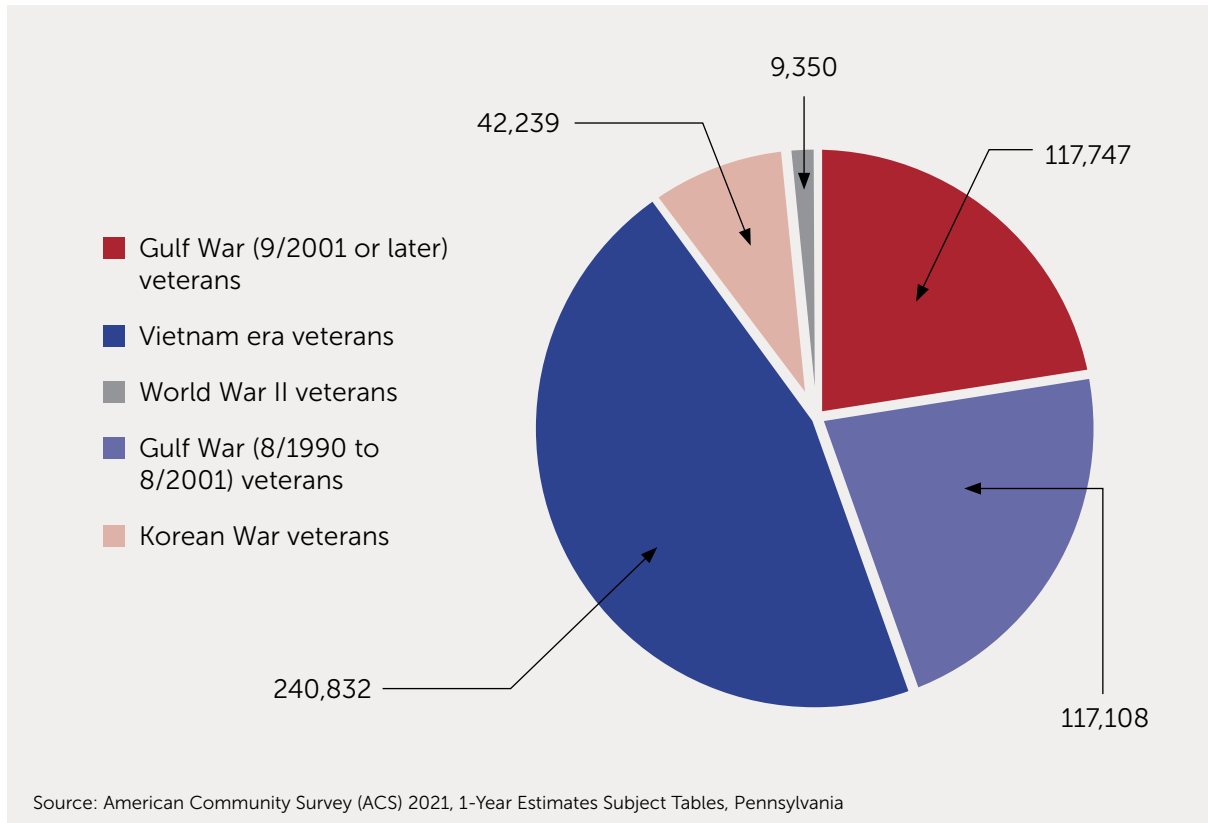
Figure 1: Veterans and Terms of Service: Delaware County, PA

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Delaware County, PA

[3] Figure 1 captures information about 17,046 veterans that primarily served during wartime; therefore, veterans who served during peace time or veterans with unidentified terms of service are not presented in Figure 1. Delaware County has a total of 20,981 veterans.

[4] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021 1-Year Estimates, Table S2101 for the state of Pennsylvania.

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Figure 2: Veterans and Terms of Service: Pennsylvania

- Gulf War (9/2001 or later) veterans
- Vietnam era veterans
- World War II veterans
- Gulf War (8/1990 to 8/2001) veterans
- Korean War veterans

9,350
42,239
117,747
240,832
117,108

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Pennsylvania

16,501,502 → 641,525 → 20,981

Delaware   PA   US

Delaware County has approximately 20,981 veterans residing in the area.[5] This compares to about 641,525 veterans in Pennsylvania and 16,501,502 veterans in the United States.[6] Nearly 95% of the veterans are male while about 5% are female. Most of the veterans in Delaware County are White, which makes up 73%. Black veterans make up the second largest group at 20.8%. Hispanic or Latino (2.9%) and Other (5.6%) race/ethnic groups make up some of the remaining veterans in the county.

[5] This number consists of veterans in the civilian population 18 years of age or older.
[6] "Other" category is made up of all other races. For veterans, this number included Asian and Two or More Races
[7] American Community Survey, 2021 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables for the United States and Pennsylvania.

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Table 8: Race/Ethnicity of Delaware County Veterans

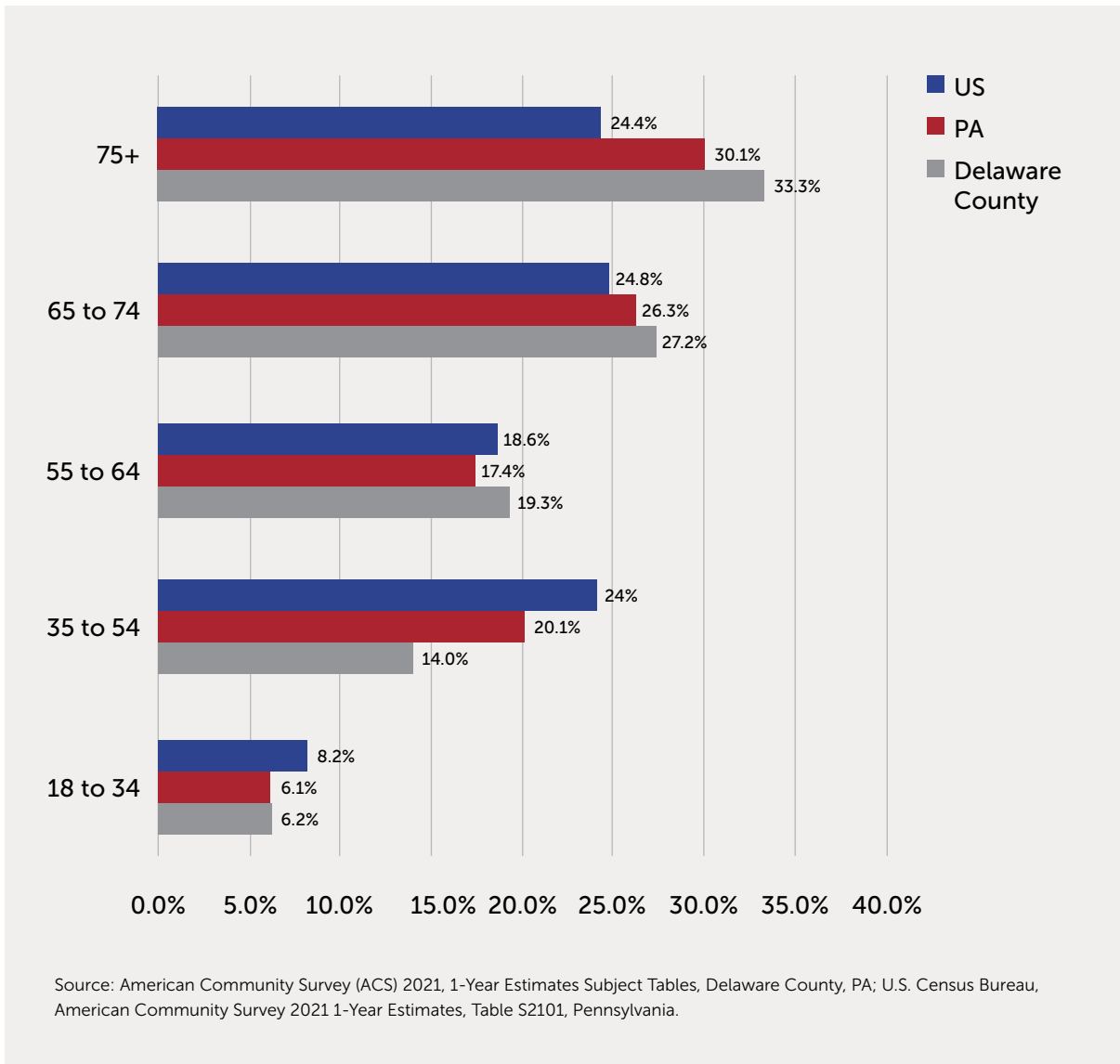| Race/Ethnicity	Number of Population	Percent of Population
White	15,306	73.0%
Black	4,357	20.8%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	618	2.9%
Other[77]	1181	5.6%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables

In terms of the age groups of the veteran population, the majority of Delaware County veterans are aged 75 or up. These age groups are very likely to be retired and not part of the labor force. The second largest age group are also around/after retirement age. There are about 5,713 veterans, or 27.2%, aged 65 to 74. Veterans aged 18 to 34 and veterans aged 34 to 54, who are prime age groups for the labor force, make up 6.2% and 14%, respectively; these percentages are much smaller than the more senior veterans of Delaware County.

The figure below compares the ages of veterans across the county, Pennsylvania, and the United States. Overall, Delaware County veterans represent higher age demographics. By average, the county has a higher representation of veterans in the 75+, 64 to 74, and 55 to 64 age ranges than the rest of the county country and the state of Pennsylvania.

As stated earlier, individuals across these age ranges tend to be exiting or have exited the workforce. Across younger demographics, specifically veterans aged 35 to 54, Delaware County veterans make up substantially less of the population demographic. In fact, veterans of this age make up 24% of the national veteran population and 20.1% of Pennsylvania's veteran population, but only 14% of Delaware County's. This demographic generally comprises of most working age individuals. Lastly, Delaware County (6.2%) and Pennsylvania (6.1%) have lower numbers of younger veterans aged 18 to 34. The United States' veterans who are 18 to 34 make up 8.2% of its veteran population. In short, Delaware County's veterans do trend older and some being in retirement rather than actively in the workforce compared to Pennsylvania and the United States.

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Figure 3: Ages of Veteran Population, Delaware County, PA, Pennsylvania, and the United States

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Delaware County, PA; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021 1-Year Estimates, Table S2101, Pennsylvania.
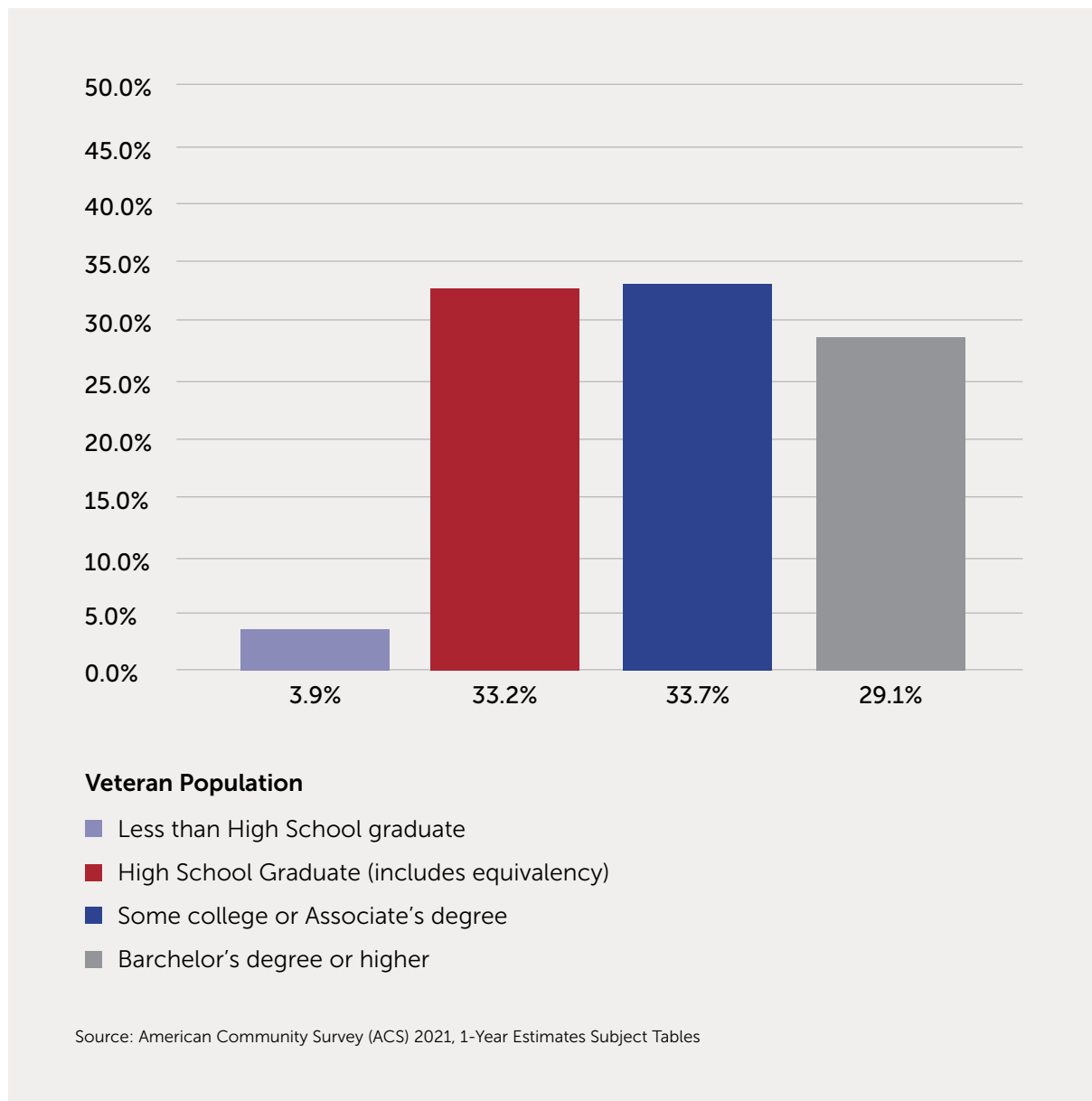
The following table shows the education attainment for the veteran population in Delaware County. Statistical data provides evidence between the connection of educational attainment and participation in the workforce. Veterans rank above high school graduates and some college or associate degree at 33.2% and 33.7%, respectively.

Few veterans have less than a high school education at 3.9%. The percentage of veterans with a bachelor's degree or higher is 29.1%. Terms of service may be a contributing factor in veteran's educational attainment as a high school diploma or GED is a service requirement.

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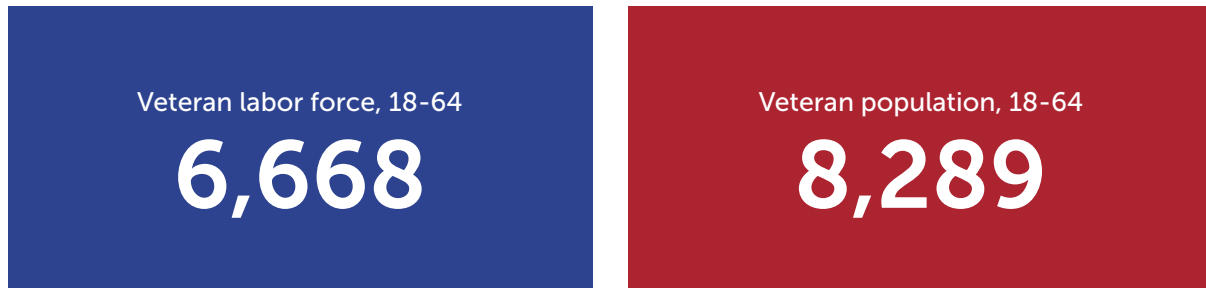## Figure 4: Educational Attainment of the Veteran Population

The median income for veterans is slightly above the median income for Delaware County. Veteran median income is $43,567 and civilian median income is $41,129. Moreover, about 990 veterans have had income below the poverty line within the past 12 months. For veterans who have poverty status determined, 5,782 live with a disability. There are 14,690 who do not live with a disability.[8]

Veteran Population

- Less than High School graduate
- High School Graduate (includes equivalency)
- Some college or Associate's degree
- Barchelor's degree or higher

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables

[8] American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables.

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Veterans Living and Working in Delaware County

Veterans represent a small, but important component of Delaware County's total labor force. The civilian labor force hovers in the 290,000s; August 2022 labor force consisted of 299,300 individuals.[9] There are 6,668 veterans in the labor force aged 18 to 64 years old.[10] That is an 80.4%

Veteran labor force, 18-64	Veteran population, 18-64
6,668	**8,289**

labor force participation rate for veterans in Delaware County. The United States' labor force participation rate is 76.7% so Delaware County's veteran labor force participation rate is above the national civilian labor force's rate.[11] As previously mentioned, a high percentage of veterans residing in Delaware County are over 65 years of age. While the older age group of 65 and up are not included in the labor force population total, this information does imply that much of the veteran population between 18 to 64 is actively working or seeking employment.

The last section of the labor market analysis will provide more information about connections from military occupations and skills and more standards occupation titles and industries.

Veteran Unemployment

Pennsylvania's Unemployment Compensation program gives income assistance for those who have lost their job or are under full-time work schedules; the income assistance is temporary. Specifically, the Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX) is a federal program that allows for UC payments to individuals who formerly served in the United States' military. In order to take part in the UCX program, former military members must live in Pennsylvania and meet a number of criteria such as honorably discharging from the miliary.[12] The latest data points to about 300 unemployed veterans in Delaware County. The veteran unemployment rate is 4.5%.[13]

Two additional notes worth mentioning about UCX benefits. First, the UCX program does not include the totality of veterans who may be gaining unemployment compensation (UC) benefits. The UC benefits reflect veterans who recently left the military. Second, that "Only individuals whose

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[9] "Labor Force Statistics." Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS).
[10] American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables.
[11] ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables for the United States.
[12] American Community Survey (ACS) 2021, 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
[13] "Pennsylvania Military and Veterans Benefits." My Air Force Benefits.
https://www.myairforcebenefits.us.af.mil/Benefit-Library/State/Territory-Benefits/Pennsylvania#:~:text=Applicants%20may%20file%20their%20initial,from%20noon%20to%204%2pm.
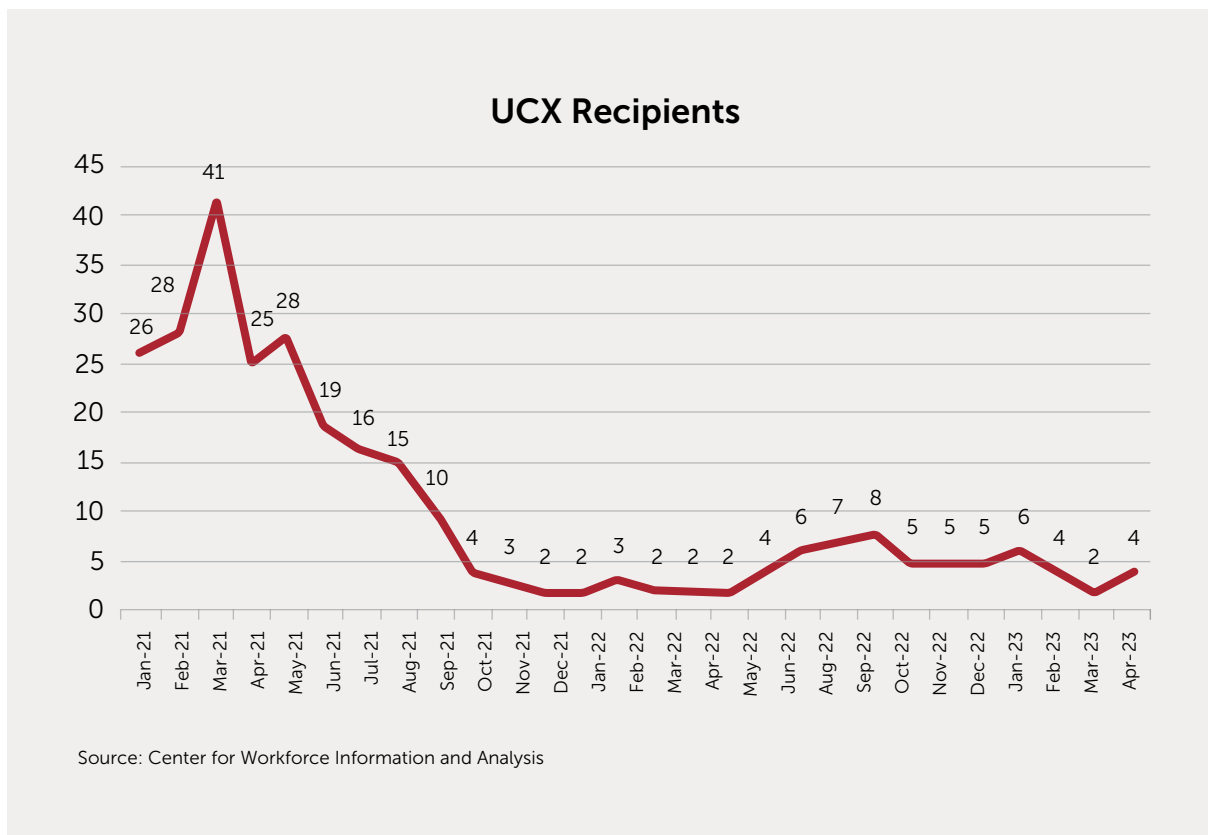
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separating employer(s) included the military are counted; thus, there are many more vets receiving UC than are represented."[14]

The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis was utilized to procure more recent UCX data for Delaware County. The graphic below shows the UCX recipients from January 2021 to April 2023. There are clear changes over time. The year of 2021 was still dealing with COVID-19 economic impacts, and this had reverberating effects on UCX recipients in 2021. There was an average of 18 UCX recipients in 2021 in Delaware County, PA. March 2021 was the highest month, which had 41 UCX recipients. There was no significant decrease until later in 2021, October 2021, which reflected a drop off to 4 UCX recipients.

For 2022, UCX recipients were drastically lower. There was an average of about 4 UCX recipients that year. September 2022 was the highest month of UCX recipients with 8 total. The numbers of UCX recipients going into 2023 have bene somewhat comparable to 2022 numbers. January 2023 had 6 UCX recipients and the other three months into 2023 have seen relatively low numbers.

Figure 5: UCX Recipients, January 2021-April 2023

The following table shows some comparison across nearby counties when it comes to UCX recipients.[15] These averages were rounded to the nearest whole number. In the Philadelphia area,

Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

[14] Information from the "Veterans in Pennsylvania" report, dated March 17,2023, from the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis.

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average UCX recipient numbers were the highest in 2021. Delaware County had the lowest average of UCX recipients besides Chester County, PA. Montgomery and Bucks counties' average UCX numbers were slightly elevated at 24 and 21 recipients, respectively. Since Philadelphia County is rooted in a major city with a higher population, it is understandable that their UCX recipients are much higher compared to the suburban counties.

Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, and Bucks counties have very comparable UCX recipient averages in 2022, which ranged from 3-6 recipients. Thr full understanding of 2023 UCX recipients is yet to come; however, the suburban Philadelphia counties have started out the year with similar averages to 2022. So far, Philadelphia County is averaging slightly lower recipients, but more 2023 data will be needed to confirm or refute this trend. Overall, Delaware County's UCX recipient numbers are comparable and, at times, lower than other surrounding counties; this provides some additional context into understanding veteran employment in the county.

Table 9: Average UCX recipients in Delaware County and Greater Philadelphia counties

Year	Delaware	Chester	Montgomery	Bucks[16]	Philadelphia
2021	18	11	24	21	73
2022	3	3	6	5	19
2023	4	3	6	3	12

Source: Center for Workforce Innovation and Analysis

▮ Industry Outlook

The industries in Delaware County are important to understanding the jobs that veterans have as options to take part in. The table below represents the top twenty industries in the county by employment. The top three industries by total number of jobs in Delaware County are Health Care and Social Assistance; Government; and Retail Trade. Health Care and Social Assistance leads the county with 44,012 jobs, which is nearly 20,000 more jobs than either Government or Retail Trade industries.

Most industries have experienced a decrease in jobs over the last five years. Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services and Finance and Insurance decreased in jobs by 11%. Government and Manufacturing industries have also decreased by 7%.

[15] The averages were rounded to the nearest whole number to determine recipient averages per county.
[16] Bucks County did not have April 2023 UCX data to use in its average calculation compared to other counties that had April 2023 numbers.

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The location quotient indicates the concentration of an industry compared to other geographic areas of the United States. It is another marker of how saturated the industry is in the local area and something to weigh although there may be job decreases in some industries. Educational Services has the highest location quotient at 2.37. Health Care and Social Assistance (1.44), Other Services (except Public Administration) (1.24), and Finance and Insurance, among some others, have higher location quotients over 1.

Table 10: Top 15 Industries, 2-Digit NAICS, 2018-2022

NAICS	Industry	2018 Jobs	2022 Jobs	Job Change (2018-2022)	Location Quotient
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	44,017	44,012	(0%)	1.44
90	Government	26,176	24,359	(7%)	0.70
44	Retail Trade	25,130	24,104	(4%)	1.02
72	Accommodation and Food Services	18,094	16,998	(6%)	0.88
23	Construction	14,382	15,094	5%	1.09
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	15,991	14,989	(6%)	1.24
61	Educational Services	15,023	14,911	(1%)	2.37
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	15,301	13,682	(11%)	0.91
31	Manufacturing	14,559	13,531	(7%)	0.73
52	Finance and Insurance	13,766	12,184	(11%)	1.22

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NAICS	Industry	2022 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Job Change	Location Quotient
48	Transportation and Warehousing	10,591	11,394	8%	1.10
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,063	9,960	(1%)	0.59
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	7,732	7,702	(0%)	2.20
42	Wholesale Trade	6,605	6,262	(5%)	0.72
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5,577	4,733	(15%)	1.23

Source: Lightcast 2023.2

Table 11 below showcases the projected changes in industries in the next five years. All of the current top ten industries listed are expected to increase except for Government and Manufacturing industries; a few others are expected to decrease as well. Health Care and Social Assistance will continue to go up in its jobs by 7%. The other most drastic increases include the Management of Companies and Enterprises industry (9%) and Accommodation and Food Services industry (10%). Other top industries show some incremental increases ranging generally from about 2-5% into 2026.

Table 11: Top 20 Industries, 2022-2026

NAICS	Industry	2022 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Job Change (2022-2026)
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	44,012	46,881	7%
90	Government	24,359	23,722	(3%)
44	Retail Trade	24,104	24,126	0%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	16,998	18,684	10%
23	Construction	15,094	15,680	4%

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81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	14,989	15,810	5%
61	Educational Services	14,911	15,570	4%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	13,682	13,910	2%
31	Manufacturing	13,531	13,319	(2%)
48	Transportation and Warehousing	11,394	12,018	5%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,960	9,787	(2%)
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	7,702	8,368	9%
42	Wholesale Trade	6,262	6,139	(2%)
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,733	4,941	4%

Source: Lightcast 2023.2

The table below shows additional information about industry employment from 2018 into the year 2028. These projections also show high numbers of employed individuals in the Health Care and Social Assistance and Accommodation and Food Service industry. These projections also show a slight decrease in Government, as seen in the previous table as well.

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Table 12: Delaware County WDA Industry Employment 2018-2028 Long-term Projections

Industry	Employment 2018	Employment 2028	Average Annual Change
Services-Providing	203,400	214,560	1,116
Health Care and Social Assistance	42,440	48,260	582
Accommodation and Food Service	17,660	19,120	146
Retail	24,630	24,000	-63
Telecommunications	1,130	990	-14
Government	11,720	11,610	-11

Source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis

Table 13 outlines the top 15 occupations across Delaware County as determined by employment. The most prominent occupations across the county include Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Cashiers, Fast Food and Counter Workers, Retail Salespersons, and General and Operations Managers. Of the top five occupations, General and Operations Managers pay the highest wage, $52.19/hr or a salary of $128,348.58. The other four occupations pay the lowest wages out of the group of 15 top occupations. These wages are considerably low as none of them surpass a $15/hr threshold. Other top occupations that the high wages include Postsecondary Teachers, Office Clerks, General, Registered Nurses, Customer Service Representatives, Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive, and Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education.

As noted in Figure 4: Educational Attainment of the Veteran Population, high percentages of veterans in Delaware County have achieved a high school diploma or some college or an associate degree. When taking educational attainment into account, the top occupations that are aligned with Delaware County's veteran population educational trends include: Office Clerks, General, Customer Service Representatives, and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive.

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Table 13: Top 15 Occupations by Employment, 2022

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Jobs (2022)	Median Hourly Earnings	Average Annual Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	13,564	$14.16	$29,231.62	High school diploma or equivalent
41-2011	Cashiers	5,429	$12.24	$26,291.32	No formal educational credential
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	5,344	$11.20	$23,681.69	No formal educational credential
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	5,256	$13.84	$32,720.66	No formal educational credential
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	5,222	$52.19	$128,348.58	Bachelor's degree
25-1099	Postsecondary Teachers	5,215	$38.11	$95,580.92	Doctoral or professional degree
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	5,171	$19.30	$43,403.46	High school diploma or equivalent
29-1141	Registered Nurses	4,799	$37.41	$78,817.04	Bachelor's degree
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,748	$15.89	$34,350.42	No formal educational credential
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	4,520	$14.52	$32,702.99	No formal educational credential

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43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	4,505	$18.78	$42,297.77	High school diploma or equivalent
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	3,547	$18.74	$41,278.50	High school diploma or equivalent
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	3,329	$14.02	$31,711.22	High school diploma or equivalent
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	2,947	$11.13	$25,565.41	No formal educational credential
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	2,797	$36.26	$73,265.63	Bachelor's degree

Source: Lightcast 2023.2

Figure 5, Top 15 Occupations by Employment, 2022-2026, projects potential occupational growth for various occupations. Lightcast projects the top growing occupations to be Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Waiters and Waitresses, Fast Food and Counter Workers, Stockers and Order Fillers, and Post Secondary Teachers. Notably, the occupation projected to grow the most, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, is already the top occupation based on employment and it is projected to reflect the highest rate of growth over the next five years (17%). Other than Post Secondary Teachers, wages for these occupations tend to be lower. Occupations expected to see the highest decrease in employment include Registered Nurses, Customer Service Representatives, and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive. All other occupations are projected to remain relatively stagnant, only increasing or decreasing 1-2% over the next five years.

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Figure 6: Top 15 Occupations by Employment, 2022-2026

Source: Lightcast 2023.2

The table below shows some of the demand for certain types of work activities order materials, supplies, or equipment; sell products or services; calculate costs of goods or services; monitor inventories of products; and greet customers, patrons, or visitors. This demand will translate to industries such as Accommodation and Food Services, among others.

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Table 14: Work Activities

Work Activity	2026 Employment	Percent of Annual Demand	Annual Demand
Order materials, supplies, or equipment	36,540	16.8%	4,704
Sell products or services	32,360	15.7%	4,403
Calculate costs of goods or services	31,280	15.2%	4,259
Monitor inventories of products or materials	29,220	12.0%	3,364
Greet customers, patrons, or visitors	25,020	12.5%	3,504

Source: Center of Workforce Information and Analysis

Table 15 presents information about technological skills for the Delaware County workforce. Examples include spreadsheet software, Office suite software, and Word processing software. Civilian and veteran residents will need a continued understanding of these tools and technologies as their demand increases.

Table 15: Tools and Technologies

Tools and Technologies	2026 Employment	Percent of Annual Demand	Annual Demand
Spreadsheet software	208,380	81.2%	22,793
Office suite software	192,760	73.5%	20,622
Data user interface and query software	183,590	71.6%	20,115
Word processing software	189,390	70.3%	19,725
Personal computers	181,060	69.1%	17,154

Source: Center of Workforce Information and Analysis

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■ Veteran Occupations and Skills

It is important to understand military occupations and skills in order to think through veterans transferring skills into the civilian workforce. The 2.1 million individuals in the armed forces make up the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard; there are also reserve and national guard components.[17] The military consists of enlisted personnel and officers. Enlisted personnel make up the majority of the military, 82%, and complete operations of the armed forces. Officers compile the other 18% and they have more specific expertise.

The *Bureau of Labor Statistics* organizes enlisted personnel and officers by military occupational groups. This is not to be confused with standard occupation groups, which are similar. Standard occupation groups relate to SOC and O*NET coding, which are the codes used to describe jobs/occupations. Occupation groups are reflective of 2-Digit SOC codes for occupations. Associated industries refer to standard industry codes by 2-Digit NAICS codes. Construction, for example, is coded 23 by the first two digits in a NAICS code. Comparisons among military occupation groups, standard occupation groups, and standard industry titles give some insight into their associations.

Table 16: Understanding Military occupation groups, standard occupation groups, and industries

Military Occupational Groups	These are based on information from BLS' Occupational Outlook Handbook regarding military careers. Enlisted personnel and officers are organized by these occupation classifications.
Standard Occupation Groups	These are occupation groups, which are also called occupation families or profiles. These are 2-Digit SOC codes. For example, Construction and Extraction's occupation group is 47-0000. Construction laborers are an example of a 5-Digit SOC code that is part of this occupation profile. Construction laborers are coded as 47-2061. Think of it as Construction and Extraction-related occupations start with 47- and then have unique digits after 47- so one can understand what Construction and Extraction occupations are being referred to.
Standard Industries	These kinds of industries are referenced above in Table 7 with Delaware County's top industries. Occupations fall under certain industries. Occupation profile codes (SOC codes) and NAICS industry codes are different. For example, Construction's 2-Digit industry code is 23, but the occupations that fall under the industry have occupation codes previously mentioned such as 47-2061, Construction laborers. Construction laborers work within the Construction industry, NAICS code 23.

[17] "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Military Careers." Bureau of Labor Statistics.
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm#tab-2.

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To assist with comparisons between the military categories and standard industry and occupational standard categories, the following table shows similarities. The **RED** associated industries are also in the top ten industries of Delaware County. Therefore, there are associations with military occupations and skills and ultimately the occupations and industries veterans will or are working in within the county.

Table 17: Military occupational groups and standard occupational groups and industries [18] [19]

Military Occupational Group	Occupational Group	Associated Industries
Administrative	■ Office and Administrative Support ■ Business and Financial	■ Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services ■ Finance and Insurance
Combat Specialty	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Construction	■ Construction and Extraction	■ Construction
Electronic and Electrical Repair	■ Architecture and Engineering	■ Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services
Engineering, Science, and Technical	■ Architecture and Engineering	■ Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	■ Management ■ Office and Administrative Support	■ Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services ■ Management of Companies and Enterprises
Healthcare	■ Healthcare	■ Healthcare and Social Assistance

[18] "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Military Careers." Bureau of Labor Statistics.
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm#tab-2.
[19] "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Occupation Groups." Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/.

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Human Resource Development	▪ Office and Administrative Support	▪ Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
Machine Operator and Production	▪ Production ▪ Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	▪ Manufacturing ▪ Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Media and Public Affairs	▪ Media and Communication	▪ Information
Protective Service	▪ Protective Service	▪ Government
Support Service	▪ Food Preparation and Serving ▪ Office and Administrative Support	▪ Other Services (except Public Administration) ▪ Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
Transportation and Material Handling	▪ Transportation and Material Moving	▪ Transportation and Warehousing
Vehicle and Machinery Mechanic	▪ Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	▪ Transportation and Warehousing
Non-occupation or unspecified coded personnel	Not applicable	Not applicable

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The table below summarizes the national outlook of enlisted personnel and officers by military occupation groups. This provides the national totals to see how many military personnel and officers are working in their military occupation groups. This is important insight for understanding the occupations they may take on after service.

Table 18: Military Occupational Classification for the United States Active Enlisted (March 2022) and Active Officers (March 2021)[20]

Occupation	Enlisted		Officer	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,077,153	100.0%	234,925	100.0%
Administrative	50,652	4.7%	*	*
Combat Specialty	160,797	14.9%	36,764	15.6%
Construction	29,312	2.7%	*	*
Electronic and Electrical Repair	122,278	11.4%	*	*
Engineering, Science, and Technical	173,227	16.1%	57,604	24.5%
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	*	*	30,716	13.1%
Healthcare	64,774	6.0%	27,851	11.9%
Human Resource Development	31,245	2.9%	9,029	3.8%
Machine Operator and Production	22,649	2.1%	*	*
Media and Public Affairs	17,515	1.6%	1,288	0.5%
Protective Service	73,640	6.8%	5,994	2.6%
Support Service	25,046	2.3%	3,656	1.6%

[20] "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Military Careers." Bureau of Labor Statistics.
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm#tab-2.

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Transportation and Material Handling	136,836	12.7%	50,793	21.6%
Vehicle and Machinery Mechanic	159,706	14.8%	*	*
Non-occupation or unspecified coded personnel	9,476	0.9%	11,230	4.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The following tables are taking information about military personnel and translating it into more standard occupation titles.[21] They are organized by military branch because types of military personnel are dependent on the branch. These tables also consist of some of the highest numbers of enlisted personnel. O*NET has a military crosswalk feature that assists in translation of military occupation into similar occupations in each of the tables.

Army

Type of Enlisted Personnel[22]	Military Occupations[23]	Similar Occupation Titles
Corporal/Specialist	■ Medical Corps Officer ■ Dental Corps Officer ■ Medical Specialist Corps Officer	■ Physician Assistants ■ Acute Care Nurses ■ Family Medicine Physicians ■ Dentists, General ■ Medical and Health Services Managers ■ Community Health Workers ■ Healthcare Social Workers

[21] It should be noted that military occupations in O*NET often return a variety of standard occupation titles. Effort was made to present similar standard titles. However, there are some limitations to what military occupations are truly most similar to standard, civilian occupation titles; more data would be needed to discern this.
[22] "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Military Careers." Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm#tab-3.
[23] "Military Crosswalk Search." O*NET. https://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/.

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Sergeant	■ Infantry Senior Sergeant ■ Special Forces Weapons Sergeant ■ Engineer Senior Sergeant	■ General and Operations Managers ■ Intelligence Analysts ■ Administrative Services Managers ■ Training and Development Managers ■ First-line Supervisors of Police and Detectives ■ Correctional Officers and Jailers ■ Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians ■ Surveying and Mapping Technicians
Staff Sergeant	■ Combat Engineering Senior Sergeant ■ Armor Senior Sergeant ■ Intelligence Senior Sergeant	■ Construction Managers ■ Construction and Building Inspectors ■ Intelligence Analysts ■ Command and Control Center Specialists ■ Management Analysts ■ Broadcast Technicians

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and O*NET

■ Navy

Type of Enlisted Personnel	Military Occupations	Similar Occupation Titles
Petty Officer Third Class	■ Command Master Chief Petty Officer ■ Fleet Master Chief Petty Officer	■ Human Resources Managers
Petty Officer Second Class	■ Diver Second Class ■ Force Master Chief Petty Officer	■ Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technologists and Technicians ■ Explosives Workers, Ordinance Handling Experts and Blasters ■ Human Resources Managers

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Seaman	■ Seaman	■ Sailors and Marine Oilers ■ Motorboat Operators ■ Crane and Tower Operators ■ Riggers
Petty Officer First Class	■ First Lieutenant, Afloat ■ Health Services Division Officer	■ Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels ■ Medical and Health Services Managers

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and O*NET

■ Air Force/Space Force

Type of Enlisted Personnel	Military Occupations	Similar Occupation Titles
Senior Airman (Air Force/Space Force)	■ Airman Development Advisor ■ Futures Airman	■ Human Resources Specialists ■ Management Analysts ■ Financial Risk Specialists ■ Operations Research Analysts
Staff Sergeant	■ First Sergeant ■ Enlisted Air Advisor, Basic, Team Sergeant ■ Command Chief Master Sergeant	■ General and Operations Managers ■ Facilities Managers ■ First-line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers ■ Training and Development Specialists ■ Public Relations Specialists ■ Human Resources Managers
Airman First Class	■ Airman Development Advisor ■ First Sergeant	■ Human Resources Specialists ■ Facilities Managers ■ Quality Control Systems Managers ■ Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants

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Technical Sergeant	■ Aerospace Medical Service Helper, Independent Duty Medical Technician ■ Aerospace Medical Service Helper, Flight, and Operational Medical Technician	■ Geographic Information Systems Technologists and Technicians ■ Environmental Science and Production Technicians, including Health ■ Hospitalists ■ Medical and Health Services Managers ■ Occupational Health and Safety Specialists

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and O*NET

■ Marine Corps

Type of Enlisted Personnel	Military Occupations	Similar Occupation Titles
Corporal	■ Basic Personnel and Administration Marine ■ Manpower Officer ■ Administrative Specialist	■ Human Resources Specialists ■ Office Clerks, General ■ Office Machine Operators, Except Computer ■ Administrative Services Managers ■ Management Analysts ■ File Clerks ■ Receptionists and Information Clerks
Sergeant	■ Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps ■ Sergeant Major First Class	■ Human Resources Managers ■ General and Operations Managers ■ Administrative Services Managers
Lance Corporal	■ Basic Personnel and Administration Officer ■ Postal Officer	■ Administrative Services Managers ■ First-line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers ■ Post Service Clerks

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| Staff Sergeant | ▪ Space Operations Staff Officer
▪ Basic Information Operations Staff Officer | ▪ Architectural and Engineering Managers
▪ Aerospace Engineers
▪ Computer Systems Analysts
▪ Information Security Analysts
▪ Computer Network Architects |

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and O*NET

▪ Coast Guard

Type of Enlisted Personnel	Military Occupations	Similar Occupation Titles
Petty Officer Third Class (Coast Guard)	▪ Petty Officer ▪ Maritime Law Enforcement Specialist	▪ First-line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers ▪ First-line Supervisors of Police and Detectives
Petty Officer Second Class	▪ Operations Systems Specialist	▪ Command and Control Center Officers
Seaman	▪ Seaman	▪ Sailors and Marine Oilers ▪ Motorboat Operators ▪ Crane and Tower Operators ▪ Riggers

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and O*NET

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■ Key Takeaways

- Delaware County's veteran population primarily consists of older veterans and low proportions of working-aged individuals

- Veteran labor force participation rate across Delaware County is high, nearly 4% higher than the national average

- Veteran UCX rates were high in 2021; however, they have dropped since then and remain low
    - Note: The UCX program does not include the totality of veterans who may be gaining unemployment compensation (UC) benefits

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Conclusion

The labor market information section offers informative findings about the unique veteran population of Delaware County, Pennsylvania. It builds upon a plethora of other state departments and resources that collect data on veteran populations throughout the United States. The information gathered above provides context to occupational data and information across Delaware County and will be crucial for identifying opportunities for the County to pursue.
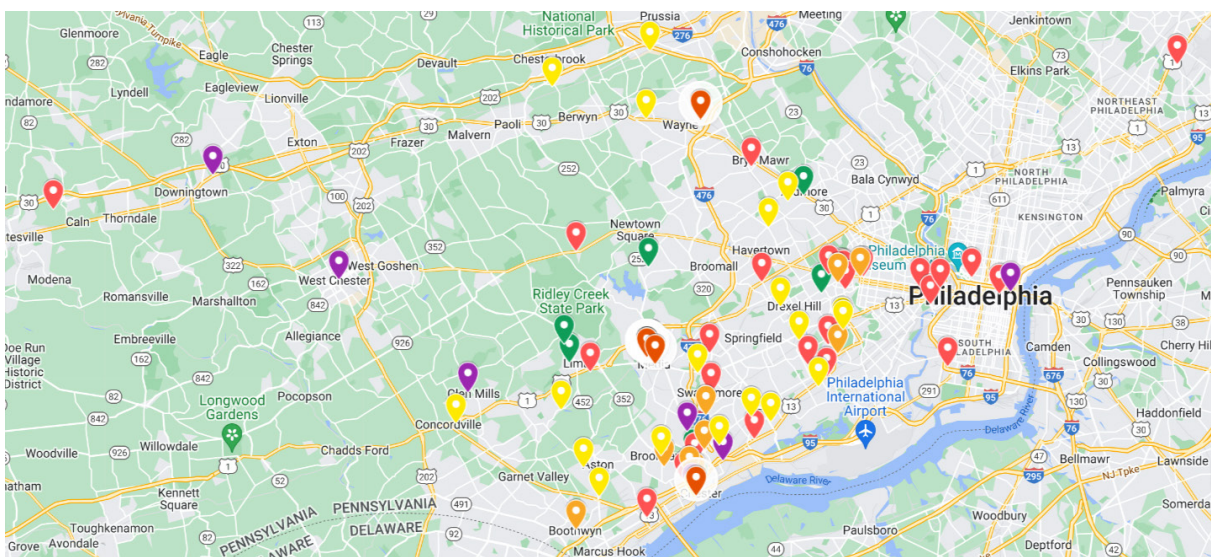
Asset Map

Asset mapping is a systematic process of cataloging key services, benefits, and resources within a community. It reveals the assets of the entire community and highlights the interconnections among them, which in turn reveals how to access those assets. These maps can be used to help veterans identify resources across the community, help the community identify regional service gaps, enhance cross-agency collaboration, and more. Through desktop research, engaging with stakeholders, and attending the Veteran Service Fair, TPMA identified numerous agencies across Delaware County, and other local counties, that can be leveraged to help veterans access a multitude of services.

Categories listed throughout the Asset Map include:

Category	Description	Number of Organizations Identified
Employment	Organizations focused on improving employment outcomes.	9
Health	Organizations focused on providing health services. Includes behavioral, mental, and physical health services.	33
Housing	Organizations focused on providing housing services.	12
Multiple	Organizations focused on providing several services (health, housing, hunger, etc.).	9
Other	Organizations focused on providing miscellaneous services such as legal aid, veteran networks, etc.	7
Veteran Focused Business	A list of businesses owned by veterans or that market themselves as employers of veterans.	20

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These organizations were identified because it is important for veterans to receive holistic support and services to not only identify employment opportunities, but also to discover resources to help them maintain employment. Types of organizations that were identified include nonprofit organizations, health providers, government organizations, veteran service organizations, veteran-owned businesses, and education and training institutions. The table for the map includes information such as the organization's address, phone number, general contact email address, a list of services provided, a description of the organization, and a website link for the organization (as available).

This asset map can be found at: Delaware County Veteran Services Asset Map[24]

24 Google My Maps, https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1_U-sWc8De03E2sDEPvbCYhTT5V5bO-M

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■ Stakeholder Engagement

Process Overview

Stakeholder engagement plans initially centered on facilitating focus groups to capture perspectives of veteran service organizations, veteran families, and veterans themselves. Efforts began with key contacts provided by DCWDB as well as relevant stakeholders found through desktop research. Veterans were prioritized for outreach and included incarcerated veterans at George Hill Correctional Facility. Other stakeholder profiles included service providers, training and education institutions, as well as community organization contacts. TPMA also reached out to employers, including veteran-owned businesses and top employers found through Chamber of Commerce website listings.

Veterans: Self-identified or known to be veterans by DCWDB.

Service Providers: Organizations providing direct support services, which may include education/ training, but do not primarily focus on those services.

Training and Education Institutions: Organizations primarily providing education or training including colleges and universities.

Community Organizations: Other stakeholder organizations in the Delaware County community.

Initial outreach included an online form gathering the most appropriate dates and times for focus groups for each of the three stakeholder categories as well as coordination with George Hill staff to include incarcerated veteran perspectives through a survey. The team followed up a minimum of two times and sought additional contacts through responsive stakeholders.

Hoping to facilitate greater access to focus group participation for veterans, TPMA worked with DCWDB and politicians' office staff to coordinate participation at the Delaware County Veterans Resource Fair held May 20th from 11-2pm at the Delaware County Veterans Memorial. Two members from TPMA attended the event in-person and spoke extensively with several veterans at the event, as well as many vendors which included VA representatives; local, regional, and state agencies; community action agency staff; employers; and health care and mental health organizations. Team members also conducted participant-observation activity and took notes to supplement vendor information.

Ultimately, the TPMA conducted 1 focus group including a local agency service provider and an education institution representative; 2 in-person interviews with veterans; 4 interviews with 3 with service providers and 1 employer; received 15 survey responses from incarcerated veterans; and collected information and impressions from focused participant-observation at the Resource Fair. Findings from these activities are summarized below.

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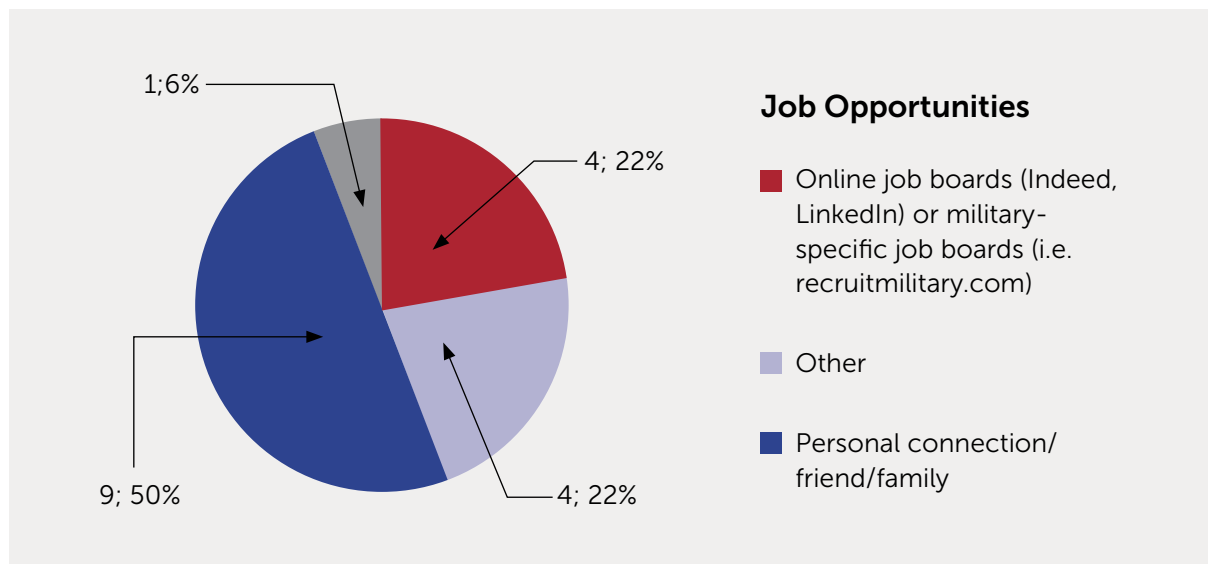# George W. Hill Correctional Facility Survey Highlights

George W. Hill Correctional Facility is a county jail and prison in Delaware County, Pennsylvania with a capacity of 1883 male and female inmates, the majority of whom are held in pre-trial detention.[25] [26] The prison was privately-managed from its founding in 1998 until April 2022, when Delaware County took over control of the facility.[27] A 19-question survey was disseminated in spring of 2023 from April 12th through the 21st and 15 self-identified veterans responded.

Respondent Overview

A slight majority of respondents in this survey served in the Army (8/15), and the next most served branch was the Navy (5/15). No respondents selected Air Force or Coast Guard. A majority of respondents reported not receiving any assistance from the military upon discharge (9/15). Nearly all respondents reported being employed at some point after discharge (14/15).

Past Job Seeking Experiences

When asked how they found out about job opportunities, personal connection accounted for 50% of the total selections made (9/18), with online job boards accounting for 22% of selections (4/18). No selections were made for VA or CareerLink options.
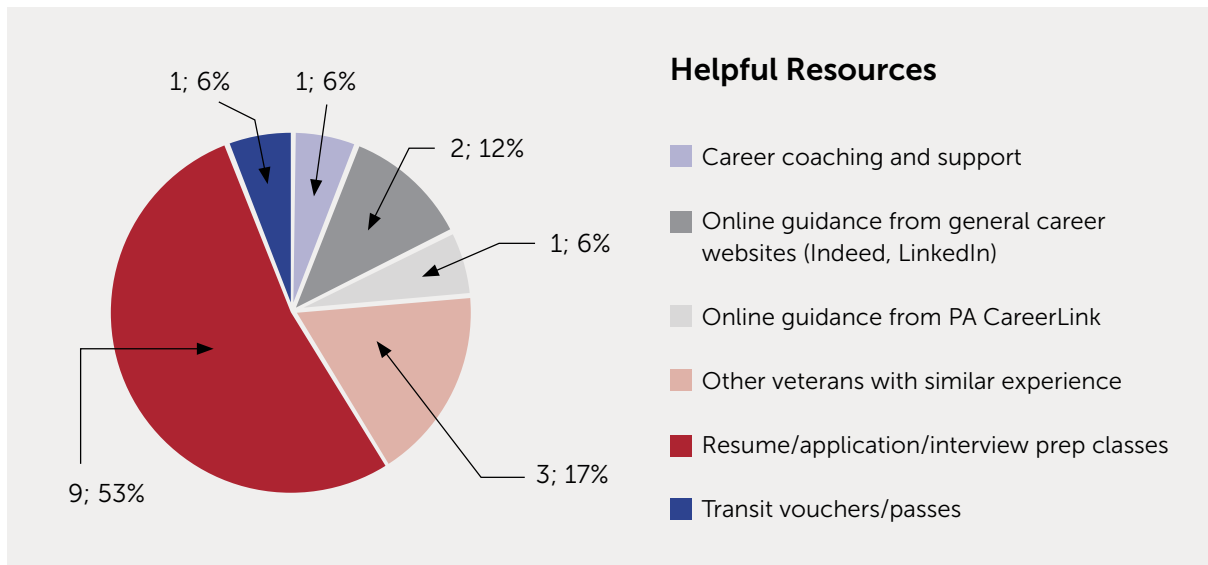

When asked about resources that helped them in the past, resume/application/interview prep classes accounted for the majority of selections (9/17), with the second most selected option being other veterans with similar experience (3/17).
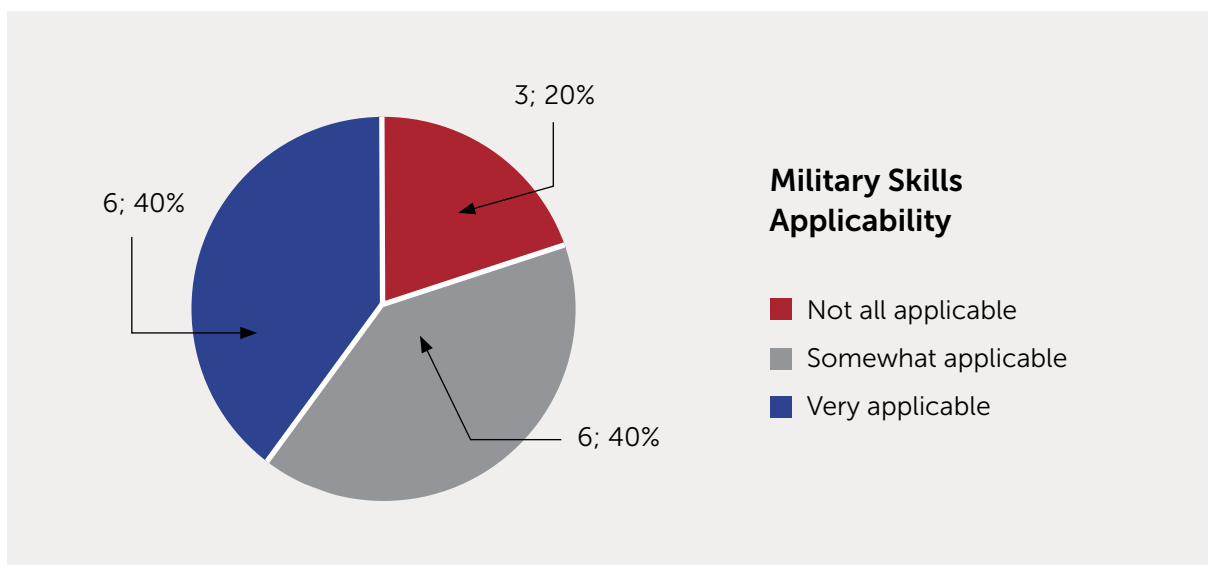
[25] "Nationwide Inmate Records Online Check," *Monroe County Sherriff,*
https://monroecountysheriff.info/pennsylvania/county-jail/delaware-county-george-w-hill-correctional-facility/.
[26] "FAQ – Deprivatization," *Delco Coalition for Prison Reform, https://delcocpr.org/deprivatization-faq.*
[27] Kenny Cooper, "Delco takes back management of George W. Hill Correctional Facility – now it confronts 'chronic over-incarceration',"
WHYY, (2022). *https://whyy.org/articles/delco-takes-back-management-of-george-w-hill-correctional-facility/.*

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Helpful Resources

1; 6%   1; 6%   2; 12%   1; 6%   9; 53%   3; 17%

- Career coaching and support
- Online guidance from general career websites (Indeed, LinkedIn)
- Online guidance from PA CareerLink
- Other veterans with similar experience
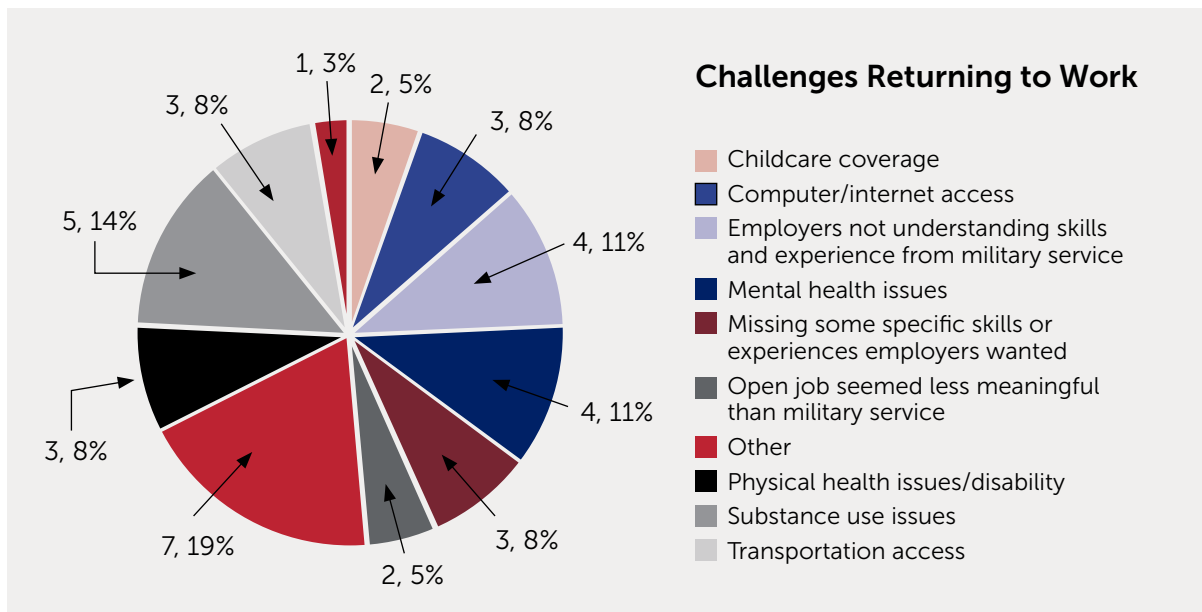- Resume/application/interview prep classes
- Transit vouchers/passes

The majority of respondents (12/15) said that military skills and knowledge were either somewhat applicable (6/15) or very applicable (6/15) to civilian employment.

Military Skills Applicability

3; 20%   6; 40%   6; 40%

- Not all applicable
- Somewhat applicable
- Very applicable

Several respondents further explained that "discipline" was an applicable skill. Other comments included "teamwork" and "reliability" or "dependability." While a few respondents noted CPR, logistics, or mechanical skills as applicable, another noted the lack of direct term similarity between military jobs and civilian jobs.
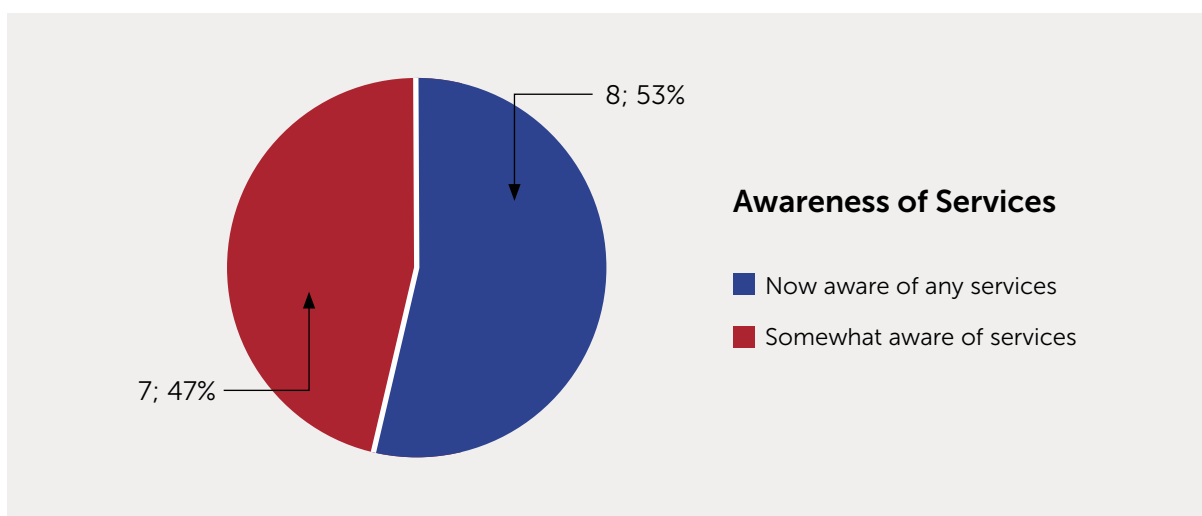
Substance use and mental health issues (9/37), and employers not understanding skills and knowledge gained in the military (4/37) were the most selected options besides other (7/37) for what caused respondents challenges in returning to work after the military. Concern about losing benefits was the least selected option with just 1 selection.

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Challenges Returning to Work

Legend:
- Childcare coverage
- Computer/internet access
- Employers not understanding skills and experience from military service
- Mental health issues
- Missing some specific skills or experiences employers wanted
- Open job seemed less meaningful than military service
- Other
- Physical health issues/disability
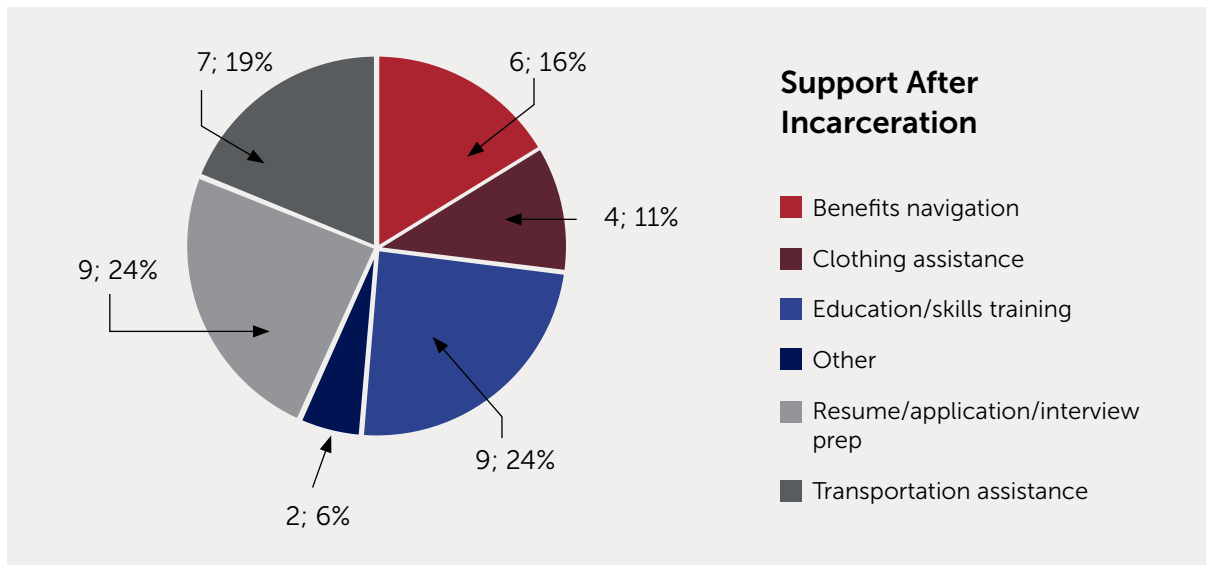- Substance use issues
- Transportation access

Looking Forward

A sizable number of respondents believed they had a job lined up after incarceration through existing connections or had no concerns about finding employment (7/15), whereas 6 (out of 15) respondents noted concern about being "turned away" for being a felon, having gaps in employment, or "because of my military experiences."

A slight majority of respondents (8/15) were not aware of any job-related resources and services in Delaware County, while 47% (7/15) were somewhat aware of services.

Awareness of Services
- Now aware of any services
- Somewhat aware of services

The most selected resources for support in preparing for successful employment after incarceration were both Education/skills training (9/37 selections) and Resume/application/interview prep classes (9/37 selections).

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Focus Group, Interviews, and Event Highlights

Challenges

Finding Veterans: All the stakeholders TPMA spoke with, including veterans themselves, remarked on the difficulty in "finding" veterans. While this is related to connecting with veterans, the first step of getting information about veterans that may be in Delaware County was highlighted as a significant challenge. **Thus, not only is it difficult to connect veterans to services, but it is hard to get basic information to initially reach out to them to start the process.** One veteran who worked in service provision said, "Only about 30% of vets register with the VA, so right there you've lost 70%." Tracking veterans in Delaware County is largely dependent on which veterans voluntarily associate themselves with agencies that can share basic information with community organizations.

In a brief interview, one workforce organization representative explicitly distanced themselves from the category of "serving veterans", saying that they might "happen to serve veterans and they are federally prioritized" but did not track veteran status or attempt to target veterans for outreach. Other stakeholders similarly relied on veterans themselves to support veteran outreach efforts, such as those working in education institutions, or working in agencies that were already proximal to veterans, primarily in areas of the criminal justice system. Some stakeholders noted capacity as a limitation in being able to conduct significant outreach, given the lack of additional dedicated staff.

Siloed Organizations: It became clear that many stakeholders were not aware of one another's offerings or how they could partner with others to serve veterans. For example, a participant in the focus group said, "This is the first time I've known about your program or been connected to you." As a result of the focus group, these stakeholders exchanged contact information and briefly brainstormed how they could work together, planning to meet for further discussion. **This indicated a significant lack of existing connections between organizations that serve veterans in Delaware County.**

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At the Resource Fair, while TPMA observed friendly exchanges and existing relationships including between an employer representative and engaged veterans, many organizations discussed how their organization did not collaborate with other service providers across the county. For example, when asked how their agency partners with other organizations in Delaware County, one representative said, "We don't really do that. We refer people." Other organizations and veterans at the event also downplayed partnerships and collaboration, or mentioned the lack of connection while wishing there were more collaboration.

Connection to Services: Veterans and service providers emphasized the lack of awareness and willingness of veterans to utilize services as a major challenge in service provision, rather than the services lacking utility or merit.

One stakeholder explained, "There's plenty of services, there's all kinds of things we can connect them to. Its people don't know about them." Both of the above challenges likely contribute to the overall lack of awareness veterans have for what is available to them. **However, this indicates that communication efforts by service providers and others including traditional and digital media fail to effectively tailor messaging to veterans.**

In addition, there remains, for some veterans, a cultural norm that asking for help or needing support is "not okay." One service provider said, "Stigma about talking about money and other things limits participation." A veteran said, "Veterans don't want to feel like they're asking for a handout." This reluctance to receive support, while less prevalent in younger generations according to stakeholders, is still a significant barrier in getting veterans connected to services.

According to some service providers veterans worry about losing benefits upon gaining employment, which may be another barrier to program participation. While this wasn't a concern brought up directly from veterans, service providers reported this element as also limiting service program participation.

Opportunities

Connecting with Families: Some service organization representatives said that their first point of contact comes often from family members of veterans, rather than the veterans themselves: "A lot of the time it's a spouse or adult children dragging them in." This trend was noted particularly among organizations providing healthcare, mental health, or substance misuse services. However, healthcare was not the only area in which family was an important element. One veteran said, "When you talk about veterans, you can't talk about them as just individuals, because they're in families and trying to take care of their families..." **This suggests that one of the most motivating factors for veterans to connect to services is improving their family's quality of life,** which may include getting support for themselves related to work skills and job seeking as well as deeper struggles with mental health and/or addiction.

Trust and Community: Many stakeholders emphasized the issue of trust and the importance of personal connection. Stakeholders mentioned the bureaucracy of the VA and government agencies, while directly noting the lack of trust many veterans have with those associated agencies. One stakeholder said, "If I can connect them to a real person somewhere, that's gonna be better than just sending them to something general." Another said, "Veterans want a GPS...They want to know what it is they have to do, and they'll do...If I can say, let me connect you to [named

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individual]…" Because many of those working in service provision targeting veterans are veterans or family members of veterans, this personal connection means more than just a departure from bureaucratic process, but often someone who understands their experiences intimately.

Related to trust and personal connection in service provision is the importance of veteran community-building. Veterans engaged throughout this process described some generational differences in how veterans associate with one another and with veteran-related organizations and services. One veteran described older generations as getting together with one another through VFWs and other veteran organizations, while younger veterans seemed more isolated and less likely to be part of a larger veteran community. In addition, another veteran said, "It's different what rank you come from, too, whether you're an officer…it's different." These differences make intergenerational support and encouragement to reach out less likely, but also offer avenues for more targeted community-building efforts. **Rather than speaking to veterans as a homogenous group, community organizations and agencies could drill down to these more specific categories when looking to foster veteran relationships.**

Value of Discipline, Teamwork, and Mission: When asked about the skills and knowledge veterans bring to the workplace veterans, service providers, and employers almost universally described similar characteristics. Discipline whether described as "self-discipline" or a variation came up frequently including descriptions of "setting a goal and making it happen," in other words, staying focused and personally dedicated to achievement. Stakeholders also emphasized veterans' skills in working with others in a team environment. This is related to discipline in that reliability is necessary for group trust and delegation of crucial tasks for efficiency but is important as workplaces look for these so-called "soft skills" that beyond technical expertise or knowledge can determine the long-term success of employees and projects. **Moreover, stakeholders also noted the importance of a meaningful mission, or feeling like the veteran worker is contributing to something greater than themselves in the workplace.** This "mission-driven" value is important for employers to understand if they are truly looking to foster veteran-friendly workplaces and recruit veterans for the above two valuable elements they bring to their work.

Key Takeaways

1. Not only is it difficult to connect veterans to services, but it is difficult to gather basic information to conduct outreach to connect them to resources.

2. Organizations serving veterans can enhance collaboration efforts to better serve veterans.

3. Outreach strategies to connect with veterans should consider the generational context and tailor approaches accordingly.

4. Connecting with families and providing support to veteran family members could have a ripple effect on the veteran.

5. Veterans find it important to feel like they are contributing to a greater cause, thus they seek meaning in their work.

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■ Best Practice Research

This section highlights some best practices, and evidence-based programs for recruiting veterans for services and programs. Included in this section are program highlights and strategies along with a link to the resource for further reading. Best practice and evidence-based programs can help reduce and eliminate strategies and practices that have negative effects on program design and implementation.

Tools for Consideration when designing and implementing Veteran Programs.

Pathways To Work[28]

Key Findings: The National Registry is a tool for organizations and program developers to find evidence-based programs, best practices, and intervention resources for program design. The National Registry is a free web-based platform that allows the user to search a variety of evidenced based programs that were funded by local, state and federal resources for specific populations, such as veterans., disabled veterans and veterans returning to work. Search filters include:

- Study design
- Period of the study
- Outcomes of the study
- The funding institution

When designing programs focused on veteran services and programs, The National Registry can provide information on program strategies that work and those with limitations.

Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) Research Study Design - A Logic Model for Veterans-Serving Employment and Training Program Services in AJCs[29]

Key Findings: This study provides a graphical representation of a logic model for the program's impact and characteristics of participants and their surrounding environments that can influence veteran involvement in services, especially in the American Job Center Network (AJC).

It is critical to remember that programs must be leveraged across systems and partnerships to help increase effectiveness and exposure. A LOGIC Model is an evidenced-based strategy that helps organizations define partnerships and how those partnerships impact programmatic outcomes. This study illustrates mechanizations for designing veteran programs that impact the veteran population and how to construct a community of partnerships that help leverage the intended results of the proposed program.

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[28] Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse, (2023). *https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/.*
[29] Abt Associates, "Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) Research Study Design," (2018). *https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/VETS-KDR.pdf.*

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The LOGIC Model identifies:

- Resources: Funds and regulations
- Inputs: Line staff, supervisors, space, computer systems
- Activities: Intensive services, non-intensive services, referrals from non-AJC services
- Outcomes: Time to (re)employment, earnings, benefit, UI/UCX benefits paid, use of other government programs

This publication identifies key systems and programs that exist to help assist veterans including:

- Exiting the Military – As veterans exit the military, their information is uploaded to a database of information, the Veterans' Data Exchange Initiative (VDEI), which allows certain entities to access veteran contact information to support outreach efforts.
- Transition Assistance Program (TAP) – Offers services to help retiring and separating military personnel make the transition to the civilian labor market.
- DOL Funded Services – Comprises of federally funded services in AJCs such as Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), WIOA, etc.

Designing For and with Veterans One Year of Using Human Centered Design to Develop Better Services and Experiences for Veterans And VA[30]

Key Findings: This study illustrates a team of veteran-serving professionals who journey through "three rapid-cycle" design sprints. Design sprints allowed the team to apply a human-centered methodology to drive meaningful impact for the veteran population they served.

The results introduced easily implementable supportive measures and a mindset that shifted their focus when designing relevant services for Veterans. The study provides implementation considerations and success factors, such as strategies for "warm handoffs" between the design team and stakeholders responsible for the work.

[30] Doblin Deloitte, The Public Policy Lab, and The So Company, "Designing For and With Veterans," 2016.
https://www.publicpolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DesigingVeteransExperience_Report.pdf.

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■ Veteran Recruitment Strategies and Resources

SHRM Foundation - The Recruitment, Hiring, Retention and Engagement of Military Veterans[31]

Key Findings: This study, designed for Human Resources Offices, outlines strategies and practices for connecting and retaining veterans in the workforce. Among many findings, the report outlines three key focus areas for employers including:

- Providing Accommodations – Despite laws to aid individuals with disabilities gain and maintain employment, veterans with service-connected disabilities still have trouble finding and maintaining employment.
- Focus on Family – Employers and employment services agencies should not only work to serve veterans themselves, but also veteran family members.
- Placement and Development – Veterans bring unique talents and experiences to the workplace and employers can maximize their productivity by investing in proper placement and talent development efforts.

Other specific activities include:

- Offer customized events for veterans and military-connected individuals to promote Veteran-related programs.
- Allow an opportunity for veterans to assist in recruiting prospective veterans for existing programs.
- Regularly publicizing open positions to colleges and organizations serving veterans.
- Design a center or working group dedicated to talent acquisition.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED)[32]

Key Findings: This statewide publication from PA's DCED outlines nine tools to help promote improved employment outcomes for veterans. The list includes:

- *Pennsylvania Business One-Stop Shop* has rounded up a list of the resources and benefits available to entrepreneurial veterans living in Pennsylvania.

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[31] Bradbard, D, & Schmeling, J. "The Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, & Engagement of Military Veterans," *SHRM Foundation*, (2013). shrm.org/foundation/ourwork/initiatives/engaging-and-integrating-military-veterans/Documents/Veterans Hiring Guidebook_FNL_web.pdf?_ga=2.55972843.1974912385.1538399697-779128489.1514558977.
[32] Martin, T. "9 Business Resources for Pennsylvania's Veterans," (2023). https://dced.pa.gov/paproudblog/veterans-day-9-business-resources-pennsylvanias-veterans/.

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- *PA Department of State's Veteran's Business Fee Exemption* where veterans and reservists starting a small business are except from certain fees.

- *PA Department of Labor & Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Services* connects veterans with an OVR counselor and can assist veterans in planning their job search and receive ideas, practice, and advice on finding job leads, filling out applications, succeeding in interviews, etc.

- *Federal Veterans Administration (VA) Vocational Education and Training PA Offices* which are designed to help disabled veterans with job training, employment recommendations, resume development, and skills coaching.

- *Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers* are the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides one-on-one coaching consulting, and information to enhance new and existing businesses.

- *PA Department for General Services' Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO)* assists small diverse businesses interested in competing for PA contacting opportunities.

- *Small Diverse Business Capital Access Program* provides low-interest loans to assist small-divers businesses.

- *Entrepreneur's Guide* is a free publication that helps business owners with the process of starting a new business.

- *Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP)* is a network that offers local businesses assistance and support to grow.

Engaging Veterans in Evidence-Based Programs[33]

Key Findings: This article suggests that there is no wrong door for veterans to enter service systems. To help facilitate this approach, it is important that regional service organizations collaborate on systems and strategies to connect veterans to other services. This resource offers suggestions for "successful partnerships" and how the said partnerships increased recruitment strategies for organizations that provided veteran-related programming and services such as

- Developing an MOA with the VA, and other agencies, to outline collaborative efforts
- Partnering with other community-based agencies that serve veterans
- Screen program participants to understand if they have participated in military service and monitor outcomes
- Contact the Veteran-Directed Home and Community Based Services Program to receive budgeting support for services

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[33] National Council on Aging, "Engaging Veterans in Evidence Based Programs," (2023). *https://www.ncoa.org/article/tip-sheet-engaging-veterans-evidence-based-programs*

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Furthermore, recruitment to participate in services should include the following strategies:

- Social media outreach
- Organizations that offer volunteer services – Many veterans volunteer on regular bases
- Explore the State master veterans sharing list and agreement through the local Veterans Affairs office
- Partner with the local agency area of aging to look at opportunities to reach veterans

A Randomized Controlled Trial of an Employment Program for Veterans Transitioning from the Military: Two-Year Outcomes[34]

Key Findings: Transitioning veterans generally have access to Local Community Resources (LCR), which include the Veterans Health Administration vocational rehabilitation services, the state-federal Vocational Rehabilitation program, and the Department of Labor's American Job Centers. By contrast, the innovative National Career Coach Program (NCCP) offers intensive career coaching and financial incentives for working. The study found that veterans receiving multi-faceted employment services early in the transition from the military showed sustained benefit over a two-year period with increased earnings over time and improved mental and physical outcomes.

Best Practice Recommendations

In the essence of best practices and the above resources and literature, TPMA suggests that Delaware County consider the following best practices to increase program design, visibility, and recruitment.

- **Pathways to Work Tool:** Delaware County looks for strategies to increase opportunities for program participation. TPMA suggests that tools, like the Pathways to Work web resources, will help guide program design to help improve program involvement and decrease efforts that yield few results.

- **LOGIC Model:** The LOGIC model can help recalibrate the existing program to align partners and resources to the intended outcome. The LOGIC Model allows all partners to understand their involvement and the program's impact clearly.

- **Recruiting Veterans for existing programs;** The use of a LOGIC Model can help increase the veteran involvement in programs at the AJC. TPMA suggests that a few representatives from the veteran population be involved in the creation of the LOGIC Model. The feedback can provide invaluable feedback and awareness of program design to maximize recruitment and retention.

- **Program Development:** Although programs design can focus on maximizing employment skills for veterans. Remember, many veterans may already have the skills needed for employment. Other options for program design include opportunities for entrepreneurship. Looking at programs that expand upon a skillset may maximize recruitment, retention, and program participation.

[34] Bond, Gary R., et al. "A Randomized Controlled Trial of an Employment Program for Veterans Transitioning from the Military: Two-Year Outcomes." Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, (2022). *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9616746/.*

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- **Design Sprints:** A Design Sprint is a great way to get down to work. It is a proven step-by-step process to empower leaders and stakeholders in validating new ideas + solving critical organizational challenges quickly. This process is ideal for aligning teams and gaining speed, momentum, and direction for sustainable transformation.

Limitations

To carry out this needs assessment, TPMA committed to connecting with service providers, employers, veteran families, and veterans themselves. Numerous stakeholders alluded to the fact that it would be difficult to find veterans across Delaware County, based on their experience. Throughout the outreach process, TPMA experienced these challenges firsthand.

After initially proposing to four focus groups with stakeholders with an emphasis on facilitating focus groups with veterans, TPMA pivoted to individual virtual interviews, in-person interviews, a survey for justice-involved populations, and field observations to gather information for the purposes of this study. These extra efforts helped gather perspectives from individuals closely connected to veterans, understand the landscape of challenges they face, and identify potential solutions to these challenges.

Recommendations

Include Veteran Families in Veteran Service Provision

There were several themes throughout the stakeholder engagement process that speak to this opportunity. Numerous service organizations, particularly those that treat veterans with mental health, substance abuse, and other issues, mentioned that family members are often encouraging veterans in their lives to seek treatment and services. They explain that this tends to be the case because veterans tend to be prideful and resistant to receiving support.

Furthermore, stakeholders across Delaware County mentioned that there were plenty of employment programs for veterans across the county and their biggest challenge was finding veterans to participate in the programs. NOCA's report *Engaging Veterans in Evidence-based Programs* highlights the importance of creating a no-wrong door approach for veterans. By creating relationships with families, service providers and workforce development agencies can build more pathways for veterans to get connected with employment services.

Connecting with Veterans Early

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, nearly 250,000 service members transition from service to civilian life every year. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is an initiative that is designed to provide transitioning members with information, resources and tools to make a safe and secure transition. Throughout engagements with individuals across Delaware County, several individuals noted that TAP has limitations in what the program can and cannot do for veterans.

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One strategy highlighted by several individuals included gathering resources through the Digital VA's Enterprise Records Services. The Enterprise Records Services works to provide well-maintained and managed VA records. Four programs of the ERS include:

1. Records Management
2. Release of Names and Addresses (RONA)
3. Capstone
4. Controlled Unclassified Information

The RONA program was directly referenced as an opportunity for Delaware County Workforce Development Board, and other local agencies. A RONA request is a release of names and addresses for any present or former armed services member and their beneficiaries for nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and others. Two systems to extract names include Veterans Assistance Discharge System (VADS) and Compensation and Pension (C&P), and Education (EDU). This information can be used to help service providers launch target outreach efforts to veterans and their families.

Utilize Veteran Expertise for Program Delivery

Several stakeholders noted that veterans themselves have the best understanding of a veteran's needs. Furthermore, research from the SHRM Foundation recommended that it is important to provide an opportunity for veterans to assist in recruiting prospective veterans for existing programs. Expanding this logic to the delivery of other programs can ensure veteran perspectives are considered.

One method to consider would be hiring a veteran employment case manager to help assist with job placement activities at the workforce board. Through lived experience and professional development opportunities, this individual can help veterans seeking jobs match their hard and soft skills the demands of employers and communicate these skills in interviews and on their resume, help veterans seeking jobs connect to alternative resources, and navigate services for family members.

Identify High Priority Employment Areas based on Labor Market Information

According to the Labor Market Information, several themes emerged:

- Industries high in LQ:
  - Health Care and Social Assistance
  - Educational Services
  - Finance and Insurance
  - Management of Companies and Enterprises
  - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

- Industries increasing or not decreasing:
  - Health Care and Social Assistance
  - Construction
  - Transportation and Warehousing
  - Management of Comapnies and Enterprises

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- Industries projected to increase by 2026:
    - Health Care and Social Assistance
    - Accommodation and Food Services
    - Construction
    - Other Services except Public Administration
    - Educational Services
    - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
    - Transportation and Warehousing
    - Management of Companies and Enterprises
    - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

- Military Occupational Groups that may have transferrable skills to certain occupational groups in high demand industries across Delaware County
    - Healthcare and Social Assistance
    - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
    - Finance and Insurance
    - Construction
    - Other Services (Except Public Administration)
    - Manufacturing Government

It is recommended that the DCWDB, and other employment supporting agencies across the county focus on connecting veterans to these growing, or stable, industries and consider how the individual's Military Occupational Group may build transferable skills to these industries. It is worth noting that the interests and future career goals of the individual should also play a role in job recommendations.

Utilize a Consortium Model to Execute a Community of Practice and Execute Services

Delaware County has several organizations working to effectively provide services to veterans. Multiple stakeholders mentioned that the efforts of these agencies, though well-intentioned, are not collaborating on projects, thus creating gaps in services. Based on these reports, TPMA recommends the development of a consortium model to carry out a community of practice. Two organizations who have been laying the groundwork for this effort include the Delaware County Veterans Network and Taylor Made Vets.

To increase the impact of veteran's services and connect with more veterans, these organizations should partner with other veteran service providers across the county to develop strategies, evidence-based models, and LOGIC models to create a comprehensive veteran service strategy. Once this strategy has been collaboratively developed, agencies across the county can work toward a common goal.

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◼ Path Forward

Based on the findings of this report, it is important that the DCWDB and its partner agencies create and deploy collaborative efforts to connect with veterans across the county. There are several agencies, such as the Delaware County Veterans Network and Taylor Made Vets, that have begun laying the groundwork to facilitate these efforts. It is recommended that these groups, and other agencies working to serve veterans establish a working group, identify service goals and priorities, and execute strategies to meet the needs of veterans. Furthermore, it is recommended that several of those service priorities include

- Connecting with veterans early upon their departure from the military,

- Focus on building and maintaining relationships with families of veterans,

- Utilize public systems such as Request of Names and Addresses (RONA), the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and other systems as feasible to develop connections with veterans,

- Facilitate avenues for employers to become Military Friendly companies and develop criteria to standardize the process,

- Utilize veteran expertise in program and process development, and

- Reference Military Occupational Groups, and skills developed in those occupational groups, to connect veterans with high priority industries across the county such as Healthcare and Social Assistance, Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, Finance and Insurance, Construction, Other Services (Except Public Administration), Manufacturing, Government

Based on the limitations of this study, this list may not be comprehensive. However, it can steer early efforts in the right direction. The DCWDB and partners should continue to engage veterans and their families as their needs evolve within the changing workforce landscape.